

Famous Artists Painting Course
Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Section

3

Oil painting

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VINCENT VAN GOGH
Road with Cypress
Coll. Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller Otterlo, Holland

All color plates in this course, except where noted otherwise, courtesy of Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Van Gogh's *Road with Cypress* is a supreme example of direct and expressive paint application. His encrusted surfaces, in which every stroke varies the color basic to any one area, were built up rapidly with a loaded brush. Sometimes paint was squeezed from the tube onto the canvas and modeled with a twist of the palette knife. The patterns left by the ridges at the sides of each stroke convey not only the texture of cypress boughs, grasses, etc., but also the artist's excitement in the painting process. Lengthened out into outlines at the edges, the fluid brush-strokes carry the eye from form to form in tempestuous rhythms.

Oil painting

This section of the course is devoted to showing you how to make pictures in oil paint. You may wonder why we chose the oil medium for your introduction to painting. There are two reasons. First, oil is the most flexible of all the mediums. It permits you to make changes as frequently and as radically as you like at any time in the painting process. Second, it is the classic medium of the masters. Undoubtedly, more great paintings have been done in oil than in any other medium. For this reason alone it deserves your most careful study.

If you have had some experience with painting in the past, you already know how important it is to be able to make changes as you go along. It is not easy to get things exactly the way you want them the first time you brush them in. More important still, as the painting develops you discover exciting possibilities you had not anticipated. Slight adjustments here and there are essential from time to time.

In the preceding sections of the course you have discovered the importance of shapes, values, colors, and edges. These are literally the elements which will make up the paintings you are about to create. As with everything else, it will take practice to learn how to control and manipulate them. No other medium is so well suited to making the adjustments of shape, value, color, and edge which will be necessary as you paint.

Although oil paint is the most grateful medium for the beginner, for the reasons we have mentioned, it could never be considered merely a "beginner's medium." It might better be called the "medium of masterpieces," for it has been the favorite medium of great artists for many centuries. Oil painting was first developed by the Flemish painter Jan van Eyck in the fifteenth century. The new technique spread rapidly throughout Europe and soon established itself as the most popular medium for important paintings. Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt, Velazquez, Cézanne, Picasso are just a few of the great artists whose works in oil rank as major monuments in graphic expression.

Therefore you can approach this medium with pride as well as anticipation. Oils will permit you to achieve pleasing results from the beginning of your career as an artist. At the same time, they offer possibilities that will challenge your imagination no matter how accomplished you become. For personal reasons you may later decide to do most of your work in one of the other mediums, but you will never regret having delved into the secrets of oil painting.

Only your own experience with the medium can give you a true understanding of its versatility. We will show you in these pages some practical methods of handling the paint. Your greatest pleasure will of course come from your *own* experiments in applying and manipulating the medium.

In addition to its quality of flexibility, oil paint has two other outstanding characteristics which are especially interesting and rewarding. The first is the quality of texture on the surface of the canvas, which in oils can achieve an almost unbelievable variety of effects. The second is the quality of light and color, unlike any other medium in its depth and richness.

The application of the paint, which results in texture, is different in the case of each artist. The brushwork of a painter is as unique and revealing as his signature itself. One man may dash on the paint boldly and heavily, like Van Gogh. In the very trail of his brush we feel the emotional energy and drive

that caused him to create the painting. Another man may subject every brush stroke to the most critical analysis, determining the exact shade of color to be used in this particular stroke, which in turn is part of a carefully organized pattern. At one period Cézanne painted in this painstaking, disciplined manner.

You will find your own way of working, whether with bristle brush or sable, with palette knife or finger. You will learn how the medium can be broadly, loosely, quickly or gently brushed, or blurred into the shadow with the touch of a thumb or forefinger. You will learn to treasure the deep, glowing luminosity of the pigment, and as you experiment you will discover the wonderful vibrancy you can achieve by laying one color over another in transparent glazes.

The business of painting in oils is truly a rewarding experience. The odor of turpentine and medium, the thick juiciness of the pigments squooshed out upon the palette, the inviting white texture of the canvas — the mere thought of these things stimulates an artist to be at work, and affords an exciting challenge to the beginner just approaching the medium. So let us go on at once to discover how to make a first painting in oils.

Painting in the studio

You will paint better pictures and find more pleasure in painting if you will give some consideration to two things before you start work on this course. These are (1) proper lighting and (2) a comfortable set-up or working arrangement.

Good light is one of the first considerations in selecting an area in which to work. If possible, set aside a room or working space in one of your rooms in the house as a "studio." It is easier to work in a room or area that does not have to be cleaned up each day — a place where your tools and equipment will not be disturbed. Plan to work in a spot where your light comes preferably from a window facing the north or a window which receives a minimum of direct sunlight. Lacking such an arrangement you can diffuse the strong sunlight with a thin piece of cloth or onion skin tracing paper.

If you wish to paint during the evening (and many artists work at this time) you will find fluorescent lamps the best form of artificial lighting. A fluorescent fixture which holds two tubes, one white and the other daylight, is preferred by experienced artists who have worked for years under this type of illumination.

If you are unable to procure a fluorescent lighting fixture an incandescent daylight bulb will do.

The most important consideration in setting up your easel is to avoid placing it so that your hand casts a shadow on the area which you are painting or the light throws a glaring reflection from the canvas back into your eyes. In general, the light should come over your left shoulder if you are right-handed and over your right shoulder if you work left-handed.

The light from an ordinary double-hung window is quite satisfactory. A large studio window or glass wall is not a necessity. In fact, frequently such an arrangement requires an elaborate and expensive curtain arrangement to eliminate glare and reduce the excessive light.

The easel or support for your picture need not be complicated. The most important requirement is that it be *solid*. There should be no tendency for it to move as you work on your paint-



Here is a convenient arrangement for setting up your easel and painting materials. Within easy reach are the brushes, palette, paint, mediums and paint rag.

ing. If possible, the easel should be of the adjustable type so that you can move your picture up and down, or lean it slightly forward to avoid glare.

Good paintings can be made either standing up or sitting down. Standing does have the advantage of allowing you to step back from your canvas and view it as a whole at frequent intervals. It also has the advantage of permitting you to view your canvas and the model or still life set-up which you are painting simultaneously and to check the accuracy of your shapes, values and edges against the real thing.



Ben Stahl painting in his studio. All of his materials are arranged within easy reach. Note the attachment in front of the easel which holds his palette and brushes.

If you plan to sit down and paint, be sure that your chair is a comfortable one; also be sure that you have a small well illuminated taboret placed at a convenient height on either side of your chair. On this taboret or low table you can place your palette, your jars of medium, tubes of paint, brushes, paint rags, etc. These, it should be stressed, must always be within easy reach and at your finger tips. This may not seem important as you first begin to paint, but it will make quite a difference in your physical comfort and your ability to concentrate on the painting after you have been working awhile.

Even though you plan to keep most of your paint on either the palette or canvas and are, by habit, a neat worker, you will find it practical to cover the floor or carpet around your easel with a less valuable rug or, if possible dispense with a rug in that area altogether. By the same token avoid wearing your best dress or suit while you are painting. Wear either a smock or old clothes which will not be seriously affected if you drop a little paint or oil on them.

Remember that there are no set rules you must follow in arranging your materials around you. We have shown you in the photograph one practical studio arrangement that works. Simply use the same good common sense that a housewife about to bake a cake would use as she spreads out her ingredients and utensils on the kitchen counter. Keep things within reach. Put the things you are going to use most frequently closest to you and in general, create conditions that are conducive to arousing your best efforts and interest in your picture.

Painting outdoors

One of the real delights that every artist should experience at one time or another is painting directly from nature. A day or part of a day spent looking at nature's fascinating variety of forms, textures and colors is a wonderfully relaxing, inspirational experience that calls for many encores.

Your outdoor equipment is slightly different from that used in the studio. You should have a portable easel and your sketch box will take the place of the taborer or small table. The easel must be of a type that permits you to tip your canvas forward because direct sunlight striking the canvas makes it almost impossible to judge values accurately.

Your seating arrangement will not be quite as comfortable as in the studio, but a good canvas stool will be satisfactory. A square or rectangular stool is preferable to the triangular type which tends to cut off circulation in your legs after sitting for a period of time.

Wear a hat with a wide brim or an eyeshade to cut down glare from the sun.

If you do not have a portable easel you may use the back of the paint box to support your canvas. Put your canvas board in the slots or rest your stretched canvas against the open lid. Whether you are using a field easel or sketch box, make sure

that it gives your picture a firm support. This is doubly important on a windy day. You can make the easel firm by tying one end of a cord to the top of the easel and the other end to a weight on the ground below it.

Although you have plenty of light outdoors, you must find some way of controlling it. The ideal arrangement is a comfortable spot in the shade of a tree or building. Unfortunately, this solution to your physical comfort doesn't always coincide with an interesting view of the subject. Always look for and find something worth painting, not just a soft seat in the shade.

Painting outdoors also requires careful planning of the shapes and values of your subject. Obviously the shadows will vary with each change in the position of the sun. They will darken and lengthen as the sun gets lower and you should plan to restrict your painting period to two or three hours in the mid-morning or afternoon. Return the following day or some time later rather than continue making adjustments of shape or value.

Take along plenty of turpentine and rags. The disposable palettes which are made up of many layers of nonabsorbent paper are especially suited to outdoor painting because the top piece of paper can be simply torn off and discarded after you have finished painting for the day.



This arrangement works well for painting outdoors. The portable easel has adjustable legs and brackets that allow you to place your canvas at any convenient height.

The sketch box, which rests on another campstool, holds all the necessary brushes, tubes of paint, bottles of painting medium, turpentine and a rag for wiping your brush.

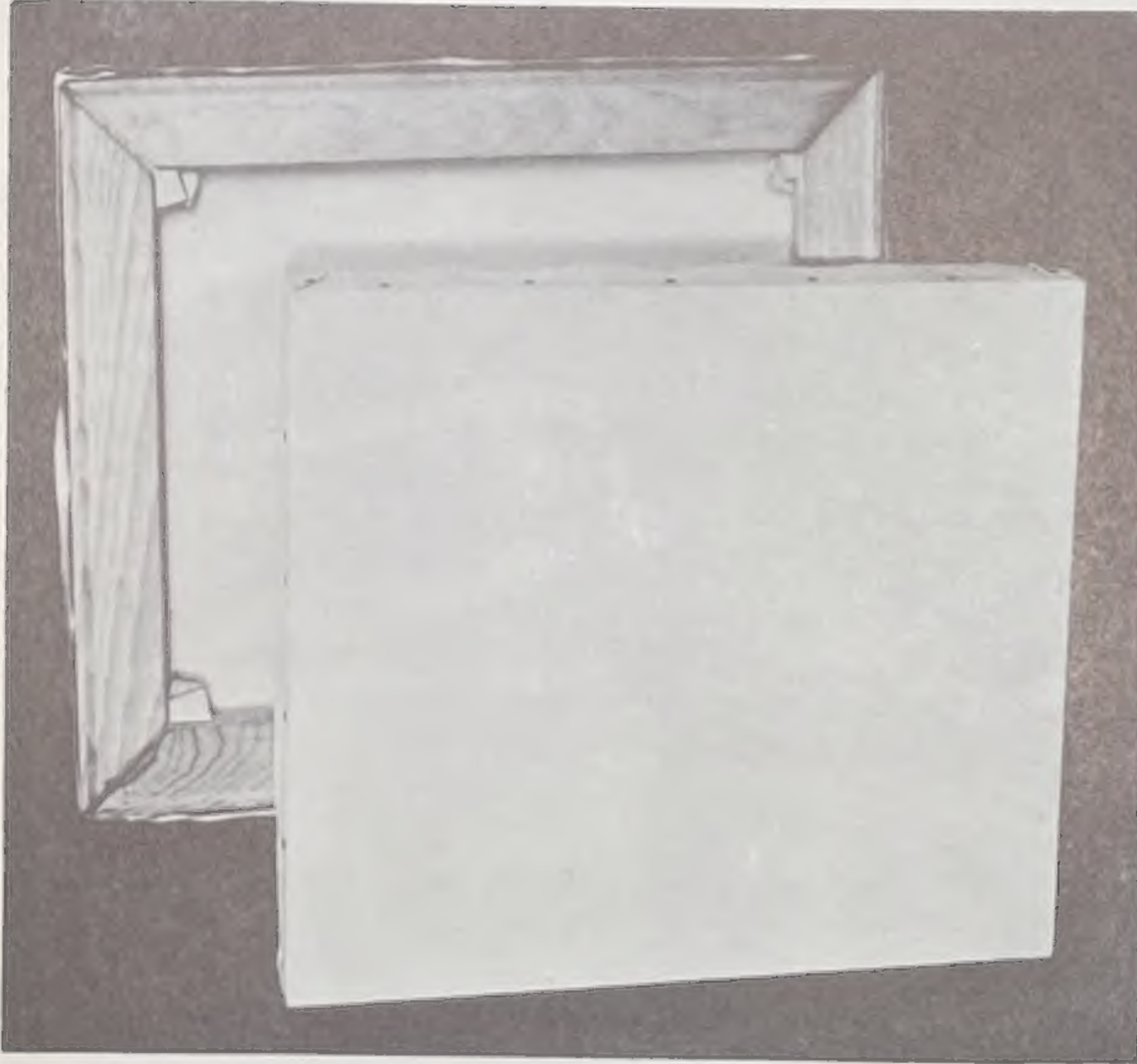
The palette, when not in use, fits into one of the slots in the lid. The other slots hold canvasboards suitable for the type of sketching demonstrated by Austin Briggs.



Austin Briggs sketching a scene along the Connecticut shoreline. The open lid of the box serves as an easel, holding the canvasboard firmly in the slots along the side.

Canvas board

This type of mounting lacks the "give" of the stretched canvas but it is otherwise well suited to outdoor sketching because of its compactness. Two or three small canvas boards can be carried inside the sketch box. Practically all canvas boards are covered with cotton. Linen is rarely, if ever, used.



Stretched canvas

Most artists painting in oil prefer to work on a canvas stretched over a wooden frame. Although the material in this canvas may be exactly the same as the cotton glued to a canvas board, this stretched mounting is preferred because there is a "give" or elasticity to the canvas under the pressure of the brush which is completely lacking in the rigid surface of the canvas board.

Surfaces

The most popular surface for oil painting is canvas, made of either cotton or linen.

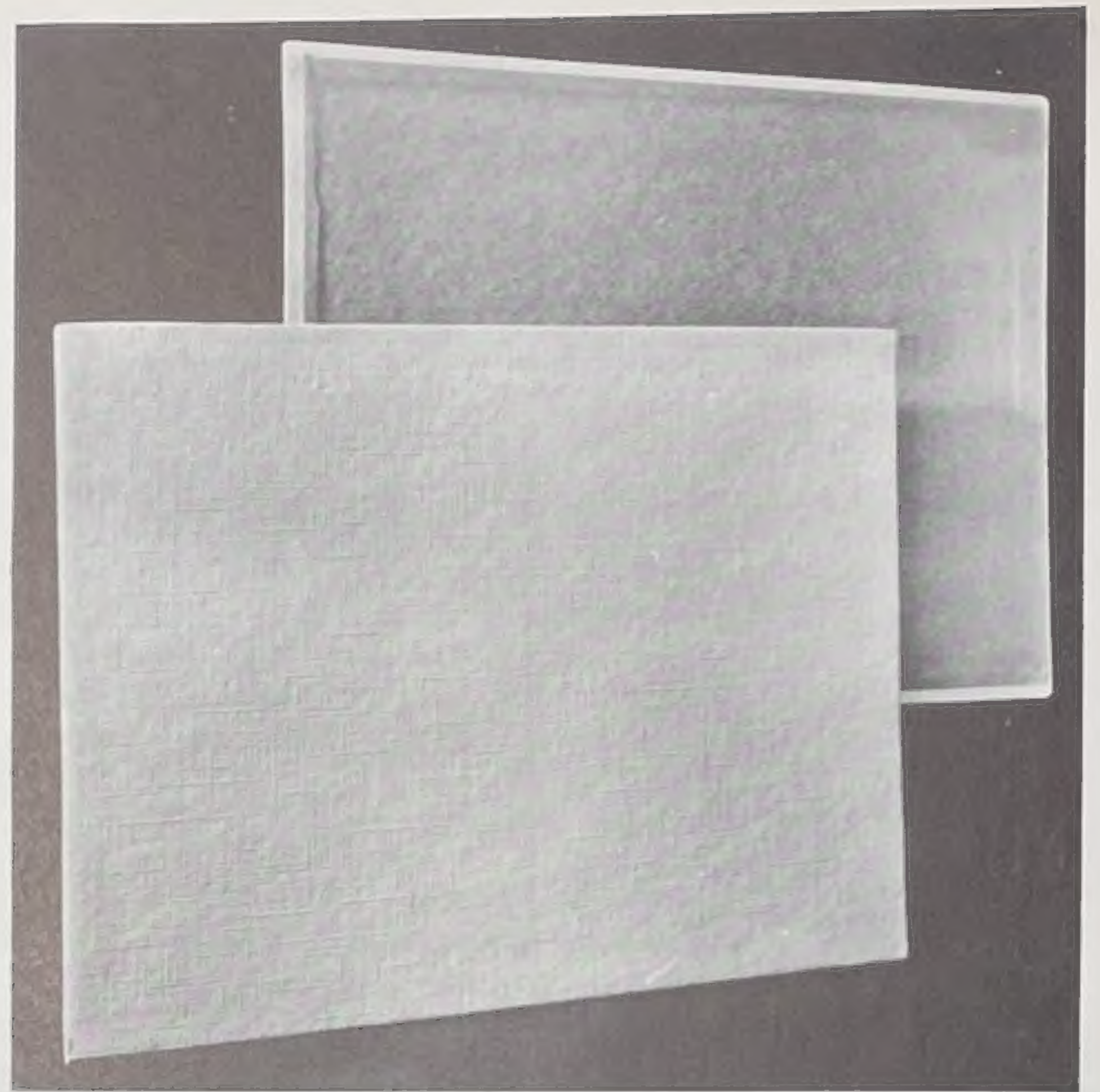
Linen is preferred by most artists because of its greater strength and the fact that its irregular fibers create a more interesting surface texture than the even mechanical grain of the cotton canvas. However, cotton is quite satisfactory, especially for smaller pictures.

For painting purposes, these canvases are "primed" or covered with several coats of oil paint or a mixture of oil and chalk by the manufacturer. These priming coats are called the "ground" and prevent your paint from sinking into the fabric.

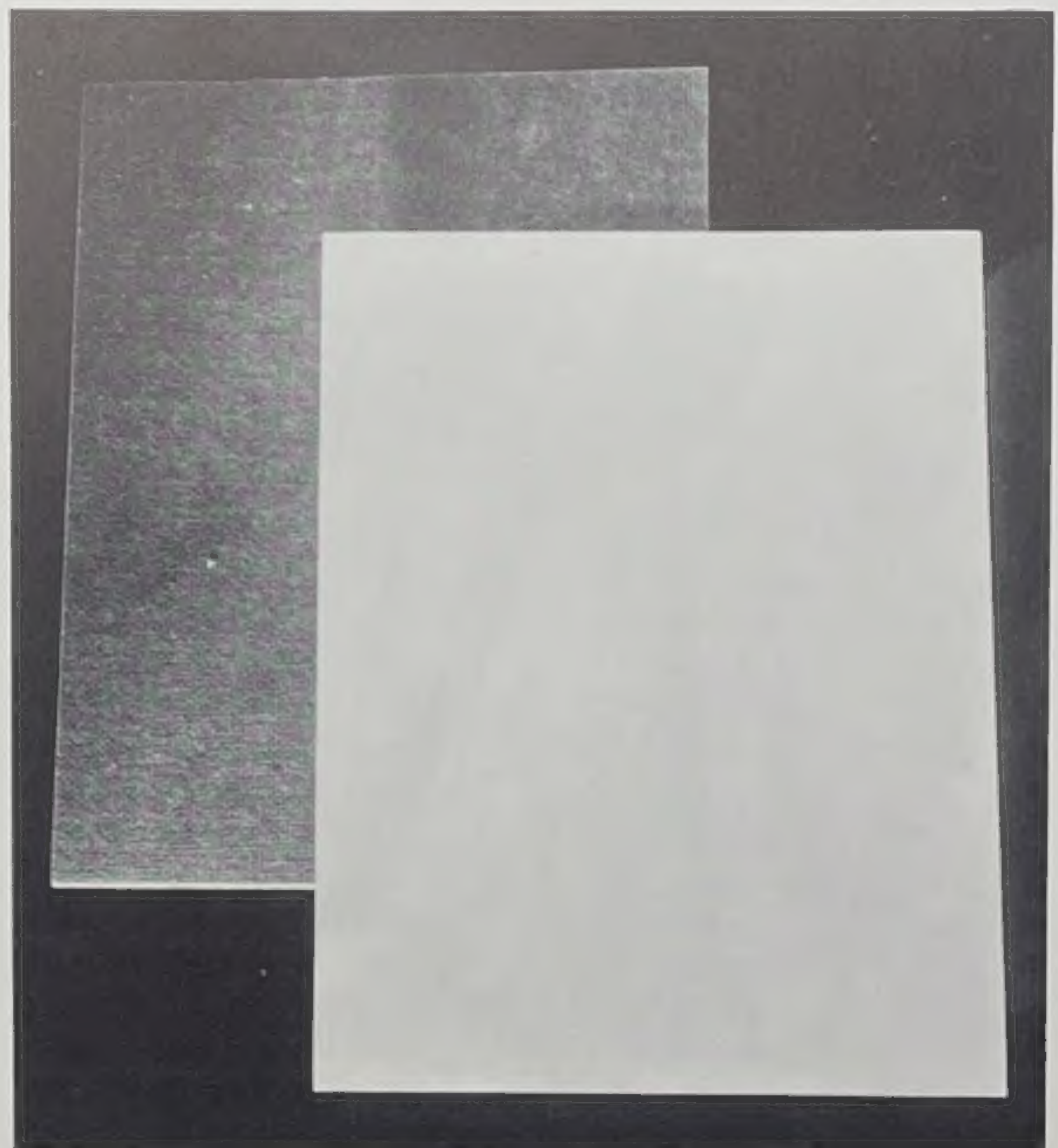
Oil paintings may also be made on pressed wood panels covered with either flat white oil paint or gesso.

You can create a surface texture on these pressed wood panels by putting the ground on with a pattern of irregular brush strokes, stippling, etc. However, such grounds must be used with discretion or they will confuse and spoil the texture of the different objects in your picture. We suggest that you use your pigment to create surface textures rather than painting over a textured ground.

For quick sketches or color notes, nonabsorbent paper surfaces, such as canvas-textured paper or a piece of illustration board covered with a thin coat of shellac, are satisfactory. For finished paintings, which you wish to frame and hang on your wall, we recommend the more permanent stretched canvas, canvas board or pressed wood panel.



Do not attempt to paint on
this rough side of the panel. ↓



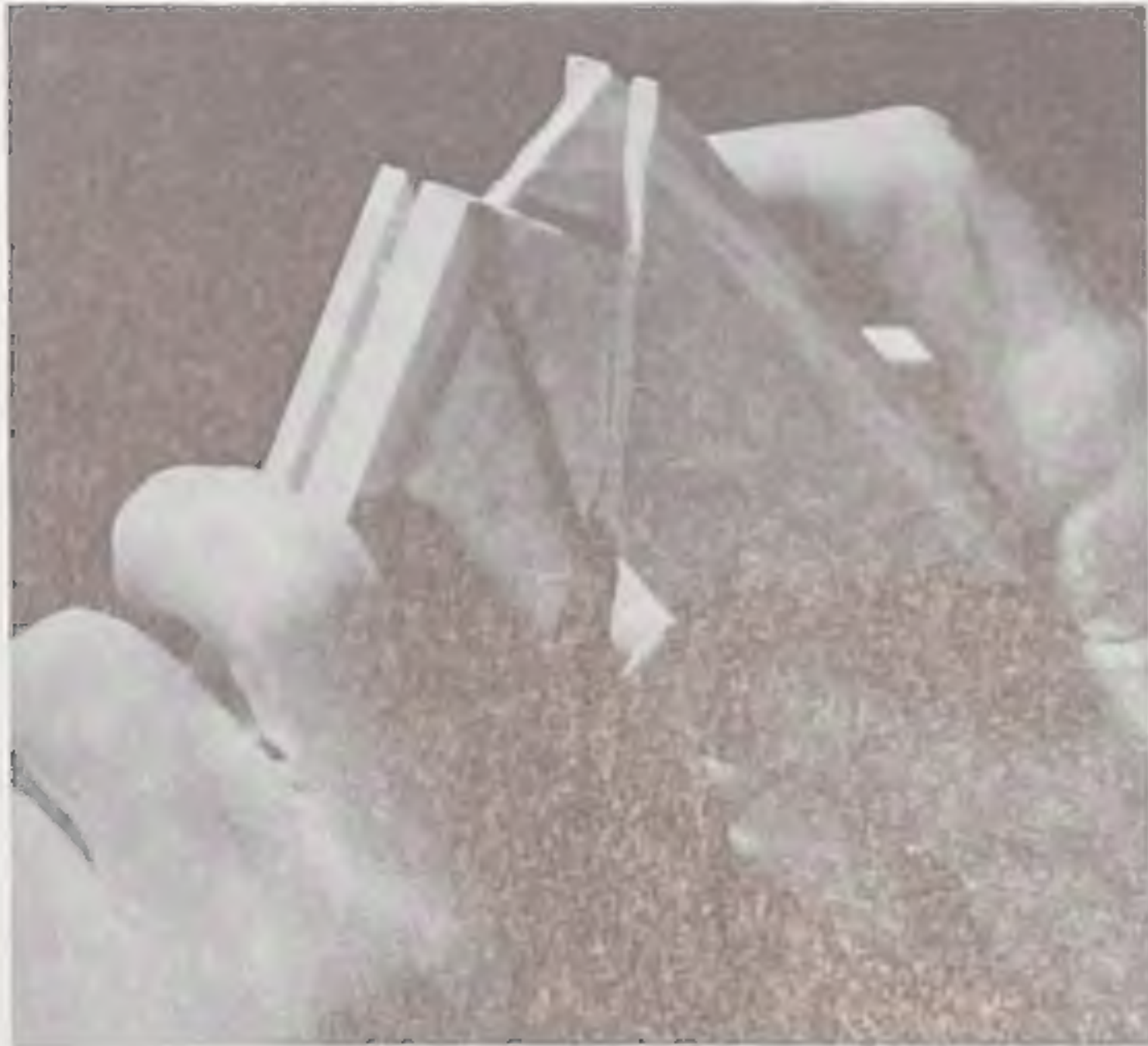
Pressed wood panel

These panels, which come in various thicknesses, may be obtained at any lumberyard. For painting purposes the quarter-inch width is satisfactory. Pressed wood is stiff and will not crack or warp like plywood.

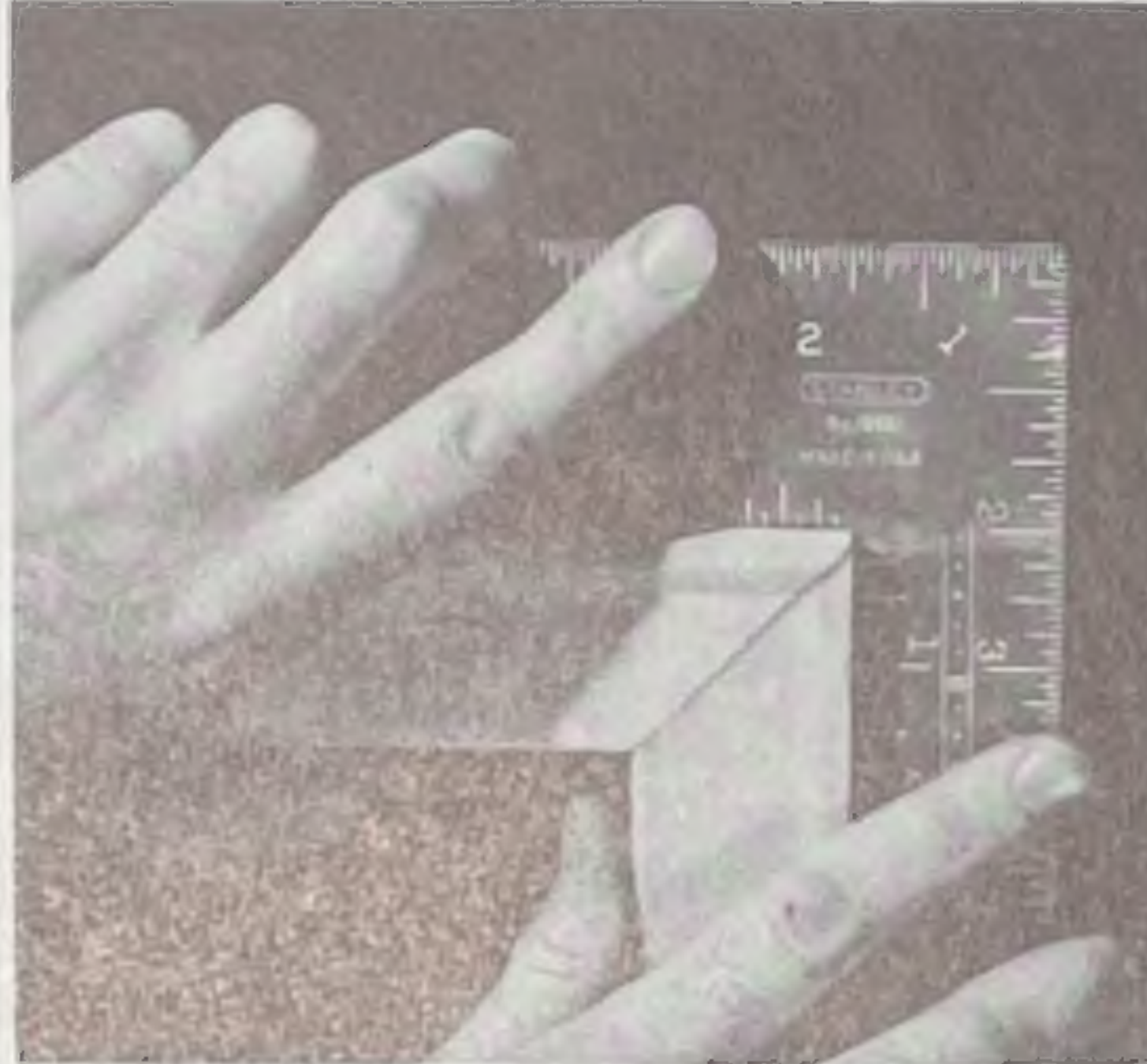
To prepare the surface for painting, lightly sandpaper the smooth side of the panel. Give it two or three thin coats of flat white oil paint. When these coats dry you can begin your painting.

Pressed wood panels may also be bought already covered with a smooth, chalk surface called a "gesso ground." This surface is designed primarily for tempera (a water-base paint) and is too absorbent to paint on directly with oil. Give it a coat of thin shellac to prevent your paint from sinking into the gesso.

How to stretch a canvas



1 Join the stretcher bars by fitting the mortised corners together. The bars should fit tightly into each other at right angles.



2 Square up your frame with the aid of a carpenter's square. Make sure that all the corners are at right angles and fit snugly against the inside of the carpenter's square as shown. If you don't have a square check the right angle by placing a sheet of paper, or cardboard, with true corners inside the frame.



3 Cut out a piece of canvas that will fit your stretcher bar frame. The simplest way to do this is to lay the frame itself down on a larger piece of canvas and mark off a line about one and a half inches from the edge of the frame all around. Cut out along this line with scissors as shown in the photo.



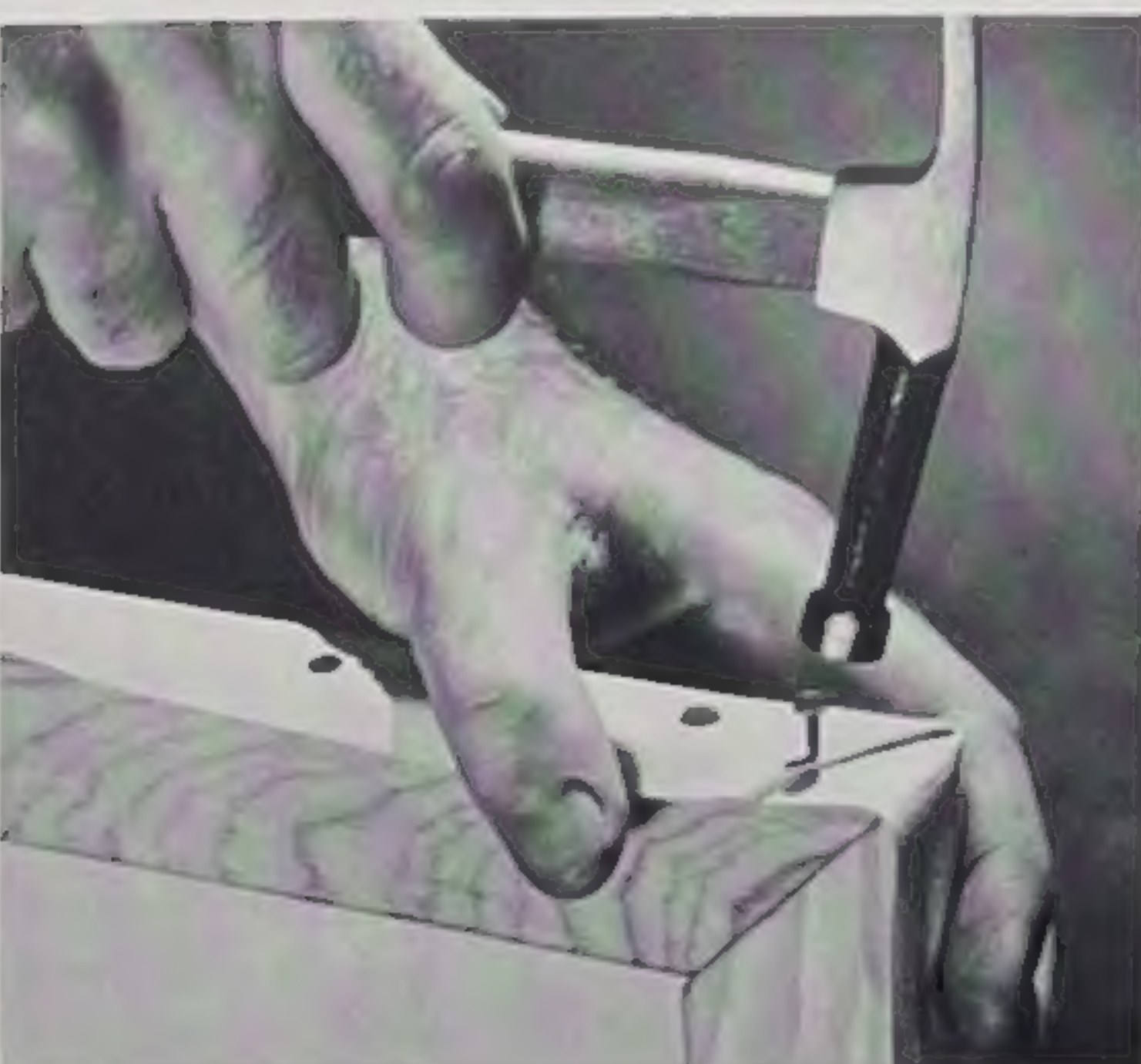
4 Tack one side of your canvas to the edge of the frame. The first tack should be in the center of the stretcher bar. Repeat this process on all four sides of the stretcher bar. In each case be sure and pull it tight against the tack on the opposite side of frame.



5 The next step is to drive tacks into the ends of each strip as shown. Do this on all four sides. Then drive more tacks between the ends and the center. Space the tacks about 3 inches apart. Some people prefer to start the second tack on each side next to the one in the middle, gradually working toward the ends. Use either method you wish.



6 When the whole canvas has been stretched in this way the corners will still be loose. To fasten these corners tuck the corners under in a neat fold just as you would a blanket at the corner of a bed.



7 Secure this fold by driving a tack through all thicknesses of the folded canvas into the stretcher frame. Drive a tack into the thick side of the corner. (The tack will not hold if it is in the slot or it will split the wood if you drive it into the narrow side of the joint.) Repeat this on all four corners.



8 Insert the wooden pegs or keys into the small slots on the inside of each stretcher bar as shown. The back of the keys should slant forward. Tap keys firmly into the slot until the pressure of these wedges causes the stretcher frame to spread slightly apart at the corners. Repeat the process on all corners until canvas is tight.



9 Finally drive small nails or brads against the back of these pegs to keep them from loosening or slipping out. Now your canvas is ready for charcoal or paint.



Here's how your palette will look a few minutes after you have started to paint. Note that the colors have been laid out neatly close to the edge to allow maximum room for mixing, with the warm colors across the top and the cool ones down the side. Put your painting medium in one cup; turpentine for cleaning your brush in the other. You are going to have to dip into four or five different colors in some cases to mix up and match the one you want for a particular area in your picture. You should expect the palette to look messy during the painting process. To mix your paint pick up color from the piles of paint with your knife or brush. Lift the color off the edge of the pile rather than the center to avoid dirtying the color.

Your palette will become slightly darker with use, but it should not become dirty. Make it a practice to clean your palette after each working day. You will find it a lot more pleasant to work with a neat, well ordered palette the next day. Lift the piles of color off the palette with your knife and transfer them to a piece of scrap paper. Scrape the remaining paint off with a knife and wipe the entire palette clean with turpentine and a rag. Then return your colors to their original position on the palette and you are ready for painting the next day.

Whenever you mix a fairly large amount of paint use your palette knife to pick up the paint and mix it rather than the brush. As you mix these paints you will be dipping your brush alternately into the cup at the right, which contains your turpentine for cleaning, and the cup at the left which holds the medium you are painting with. The cup of medium should be kept as clean as possible. Avoid touching the bottom of the cup or stirring it up.

Choice of palette

The palette is the board or surface on which you lay out your paints and mix them. Palettes can be made of various materials. The most common is the wooden palette which comes in either an oval or rectangular shape and has a hole or thumb grip at one side.

If you are going to sit down to paint in the studio, it will not be necessary to hold your palette. You will find it more practical and comfortable to set it down on your taboret or table alongside the chair, reaching over to mix or pick up paint with your brush or knife.

There are several schools of thought as to what the proper color of a palette should be. Many people prefer a white surface in place of the usual tan wood color. These painters claim that the white surface matches the white canvas and makes the judgment of values and colors much easier. This is quite true during the laying-in process, but once the canvas has become covered with paint — and this happens rather quickly — your white palette is no longer an advantage, but rather a detriment just as a darker one was during the laying-in stage. The old brown palette which has been used for many years was most logical when paintings were made, not on white canvas, but on a dark brown or sienna ground which matched this palette tone. Use a palette with any tone that helps you to gauge values and colors most accurately.

Palettes can be made from practically any stiff flat piece of material — a piece of glass with a white sheet of paper beneath it will prove very practical in the studio. A palette made up of layers of tracing paper which can be peeled off when you have finished painting is useful for outdoor work.

Arrangement for colors on palette

When setting out paint on the palette, make it a rule to be generous. Your paints should be squeezed out along the *edge* of your palette so that you can use the rest of the surface for mixing. Squeeze out more white paint than any other color because you'll be using it more often in combination with all the other colors.

There is no rule for setting out colors on the palette. Each painter will arrange these according to his own personal taste. One practical way is to place the warm ones along the top of the palette and the cool ones down the side.

The colors that we have suggested here are those which we feel are all that you will need to start making pictures. As you gain experience, come in contact with other painters and discuss their palettes, you may want to add more colors. These colors should be placed according to their position in the general warm and cool arrangement.

Avoid any tendency to put every color in your box down on the canvas. Careful study of some of the best paintings you see in galleries or exhibitions will clearly show you that the most effective uses of color are those in which the artist worked with a limited palette. As we pointed out in the introductory section, the most important thing that you have to deal with in terms of making pictures are shapes, values and edges. We don't want to minimize the additional enriching effect color can have on your work, but we know from experience that far too many people make the mistake of feeling that additional colors are going to solve problems which can be solved only by improved drawing or composition.

It's for these reasons that we strongly advise you to see what you can do with these colors you see here. Actually, the number of combinations that you can make with these colors is endless.

Mediums

When we speak of mediums in connection with oil paint we mean the liquids with which you thin out the pigment. Often the paint may be mixed and applied to your picture as it comes from the tube, without adding any thinning medium. The consistency of your paint is a matter of personal preference.

For practical purposes you will find that a mixture of one-third turpentine, one-third damar or mastic varnish, and one-third linseed oil is a good medium with which to thin your paint. The varnish gives the paint a slightly tacky quality that many artists prefer. This mixture will also dry quite rapidly.

If you prefer a slower drying medium, a mixture of two-thirds linseed oil and one-third turpentine is quite satisfactory. Use one or the other of these mixtures as you begin painting. Later, you may try others which dry slower or faster, are thicker, thinner or stickier.

Of these other mediums, the two most frequently used are stand oil and sun-thickened linseed oil. Each has a consistency like honey and must be thinned with turpentine before using. Stand oil dries slowly, sun-thickened linseed quite rapidly. Venice turpentine is another thick sticky medium that may be mixed with stand oil or sun-thickened oil and turpentine. It is especially useful for glazing when used in combination with other mediums.

If you wish to speed up the normally slow drying of oil paint add a few drops of cobalt drier to your cup of painting medium. Do not use more than this or the colors in your painting will become dark and yellow with age.

Pigments

You will do a better job of controlling your shapes, colors and edges if you paint with a limited number of pigments. We suggest that you begin with these colors laid out on your palette — titanium white, cadmium yellow (pale), yellow ochre, cadmium red, alizarin crimson, viridian, cerulean blue and ivory black.

There are some pigments which change their color greatly under the effect of light. They will either fade or darken. These are called fugitive pigments and you should avoid using them. Any reputable paint manufacturer lists the permanent or fugitive quality of his paints in his catalog.

If you add additional colors, we would recommend the following: Venetian red, burnt umber, burnt sienna, manganese blue. These are all permanent.

Oil colors may also be grouped as opaque or transparent pigments. The transparent pigments are ivory black, ultramarine blue, alizarin crimson, burnt sienna and burnt umber. These colors are useful for glazing.

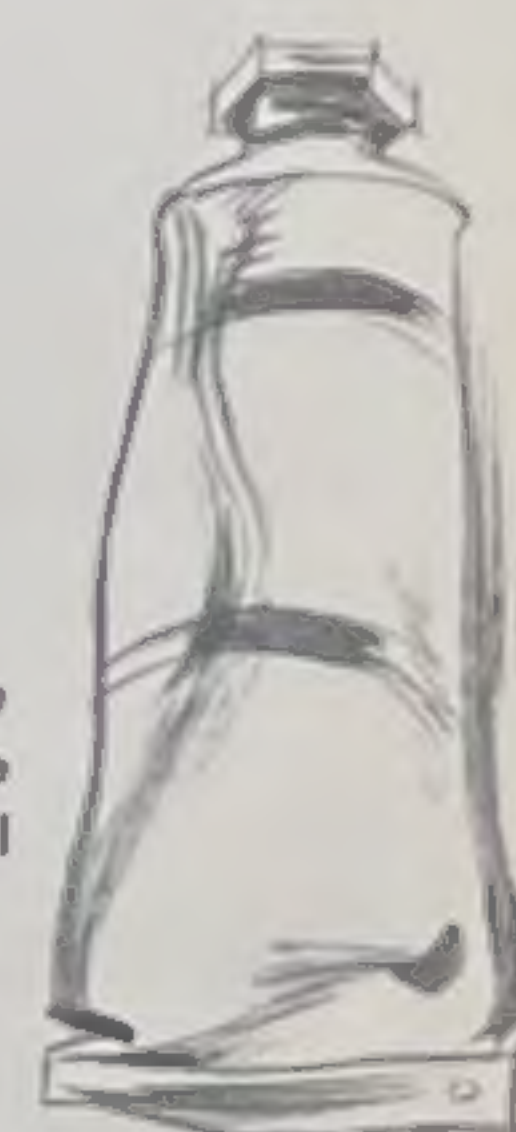
The opaque colors include titanium white, cadmium yellow, yellow ochre, cadmium red, Venetian red and manganese blue.



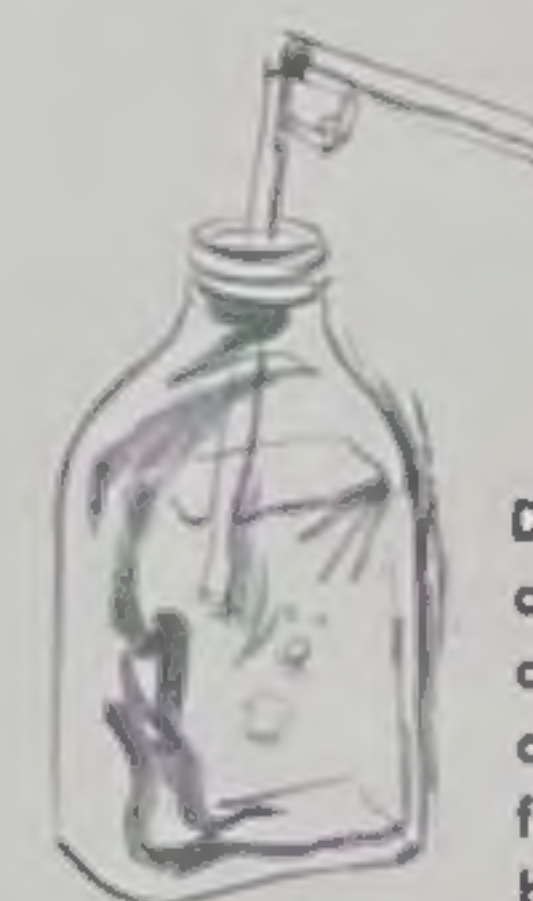
A. Because you will use more white paint than any other pigment, buy it in the large one-pound tube.



B. Except for white the studio-size tube is the most practical for all other pigments.



C. Oil colors also come in this small sketchbox size but they do not last very long. Unless weight and space are very important considerations, you should try to take along the larger studio tubes.



D. Retouching varnish and charcoal fixative are sprayed onto the canvas with a simple folding atomizer or blower. They come in 2½ oz., 8 oz., and 16 oz. bottles.



E. You will use a lot of turpentine for both painting and cleaning. It is cheaper to buy it in a large quart or gallon can and fill the smaller bottles as needed.



Brushes

Below are the different types of brushes and knives most useful in applying oil paint to the canvas. Each of these tools will leave a slightly different stroke on the paint surface, which will enrich your picture apart from the quality of design or subject matter.

Oil painting brushes may be divided into two groups — bristle brushes made from the hairs on the back of a hog, and sable brushes made from the finest sable pelts. Both types are available with long or short hairs and may be round or flat.

Brushes made of a stiff bristle hair are best for painting with

thick, heavy pigments. The stiff bristle hairs leave a characteristic ridged pattern in each paint stroke.

Sable brushes make a smooth even stroke. Because the sable hair is weaker and more flexible than the bristles, the paint applied with this brush must be thinner.

Although the corners of all square-tipped brushes wear away, they may be used as long as they retain their flexibility. However, when the hairs become so short and rigid that the brush loses all "feel" it should be discarded.



Flat brush. The flat brush is thicker than the bright. It comes in both long and short hairs. It is useful for all types of oil painting except small details which are best handled with a sable brush.



Bright brush. The bright brush is perhaps the most popular oil painting brush in use today. It is the flattest and thinnest of the oil brushes. The hairs taper from the base toward the center in a good brush. The edge of the brush may be used to make comparatively narrow lines.



Round bristle brush. This brush is not very popular any more, although it was the only brush used by the old masters. Its main characteristic is the tapered stroke it creates. It is better than either the flat or bright brushes if you wish to create obvious linear effects in your picture.



Flat sable brush. This brush is most useful for all details that cannot be handled easily and conveniently by the smallest practical bristle brush (#4). The flat sable is well suited to the drawing of detail. Its finer, flexible hairs leave a smooth stroke in contrast to the ridges left by the stiffer bristle brushes.



Round sable brush. This brush has the same hair and general characteristics as the flat sable. It is best suited to drawing lines and creating linear effects. Any time long narrow strokes are needed this is the brush to use.



Palette knife for painting. This flexible-blade palette knife is designed for painting rather than scraping paint from the palette. This type of knife was used to paint the apple on Page 18. The flexible knife comes in many shapes and sizes. Considerable detail can be painted in with this tool. It may be used in combination with brush painting.



Palette knife for mixing and scraping. This knife is stiffer than the previous one. It is useful for scraping and mixing. It may also be used for painting, but its stiffness makes it less desirable than the flexible type. In some cases where a large area must be covered with a fairly heavy coat of paint, this knife works well.

Reproduced actual size

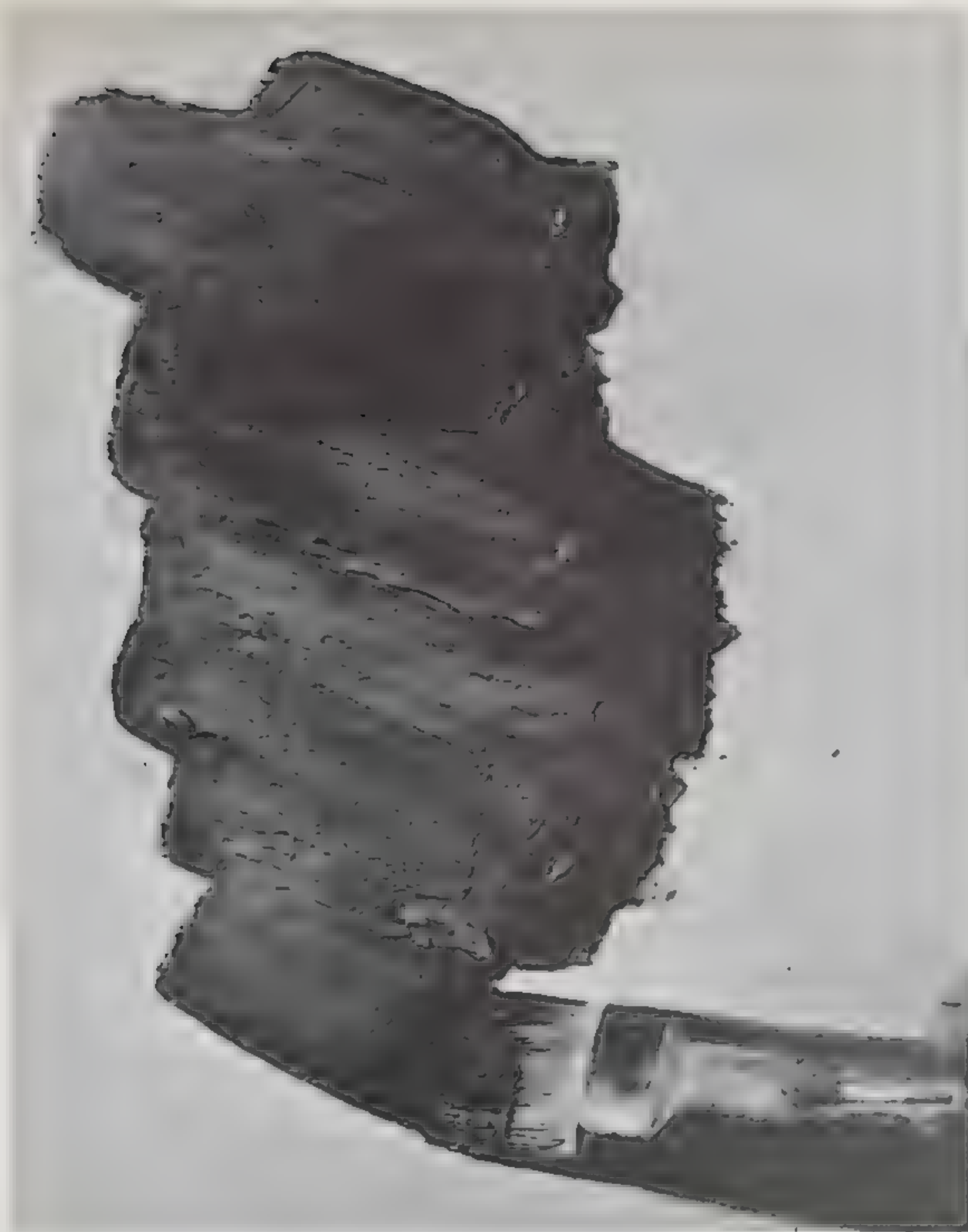
What to expect of your tools

There is one important point we would like you to understand before we show a series of actual-size details of different ways of applying oil paint to canvas.

This point is simply that there is no *one* best way to apply paint to canvas. Good paintings can be done with almost any technique you can imagine. We are going to show you here just *some* of the ways of applying paint — ways that will give you an interesting surface texture, and methods which are suited to proper handling of the medium.

Always remember though, that the method by which you put on the paint is a relatively unimportant part of any picture. It is the picture *itself*, the thinking behind it, the drawing and the

composition that count. This drawing and composition can be interpreted with a palette knife, the finest sable brush or, of course, any intermediate tools between these extremes that you may wish to use. In every case a different tool will give a slightly different result. These results are interesting and they can add considerably to the quality of a painting. Throughout this course you will find many, many examples of different painting techniques. Different artists are going to find different methods of applying paint. In every case it should be an easy, natural method. It should also take into consideration the texture of the object that you are painting. What you are actually doing when you are putting down paint is creating shapes, values and edges.



Do: Oil paint should be applied at a thickness that makes full use of the advantages of this medium. Here you see it being spread on with a flat brush at the consistency of very soft, almost melted butter. This is the best consistency for you to use in learning how to handle this medium.



Don't: Do not put the paint on like this. If too much turpentine or linseed oil has been added to the paint; it is out of control, running down the canvas. Oil paint is not to be handled like this. As you gain experience you will learn to apply it thinly in the form of glazes, or in the form of heavy impasto.

Flat brushes – brights, flats, sables



Using a square-tipped bristle brush the paint has been applied in short strokes placed at right angles to each other, and the over-all effect is a square blocky pattern that would be useful for suggesting the texture of bricks, rocks or similar forms.



Strokes can take any direction. In actual painting choose strokes which are appropriate to the texture you are painting. Here you see the point being applied with curving strokes.



You can use a large brush to make fairly small or narrow strokes by turning it edgewise or, as in this case, using the corner of the tip to apply paint in small daubs. This way you can paint details with the same brush you use to paint the larger areas when it is held flat



Holding the flat bristle brush edgewise creates long strokes without the need of a second brush. The strokes, of course, can be any length or direction you wish to make them

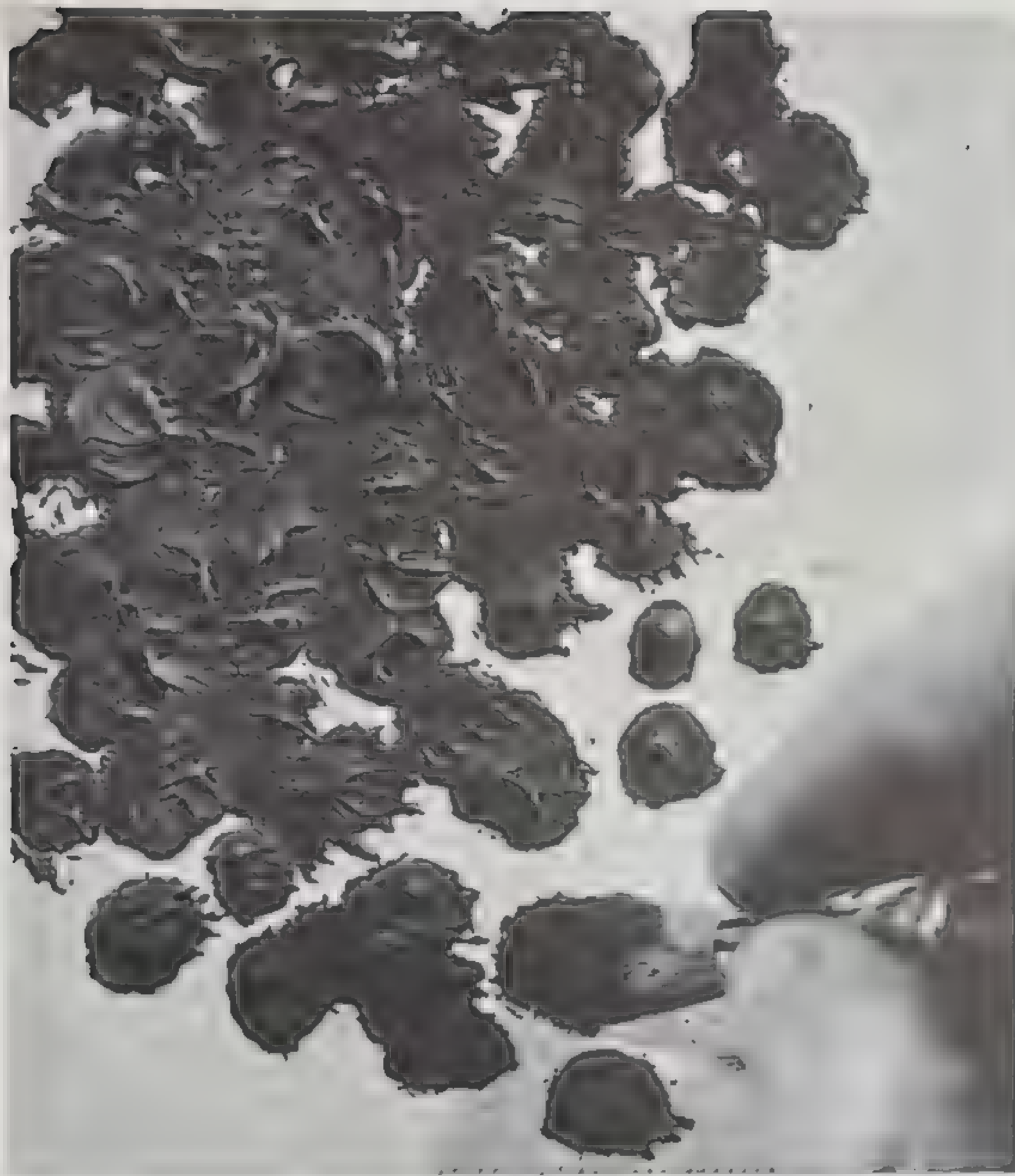


This technique which might be adapted for foliage, grass, trees, etc., is created by keeping the brush on the canvas surface and scrubbing it back and forth in a radial pattern.



The paint here is being applied at a very heavy consistency and the brush remains in contact with the canvas as the strokes are made. The short curving movement of the brush gives this interesting pattern which might be appropriate for bark, earth, water or similar textures suggested by this pattern

Round brushes



A pointillistic technique. The round brush is held at almost right angles to the canvas surface. The paint is applied in daubs. The brush is pushed down firmly on the surface and raised straight up, creating the ridges and crinkly pattern.



Holding the round brush at about a 45° angle to the surface creates long tapered strokes.



The same as the preceding strokes except for length. The mark left by the round brush is most easily identified by the taper at each end of the stroke.



This surface detail shows a typical pattern of tapered strokes left by the round brush.



The mahl stick is a wooden or aluminum rod with a ball tip. Usually about a yard long it is very useful as a support to steady your hand when painting in fine detail. The stick is held in the left hand and rested against the edge of the canvas.



The easiest way to paint a straight edge or line with a brush is to use a mahl stick in the manner shown above. Rest the tip of the stick on the canvas or against the edge and draw the ferrule of your brush smoothly along the stick in a straight line.

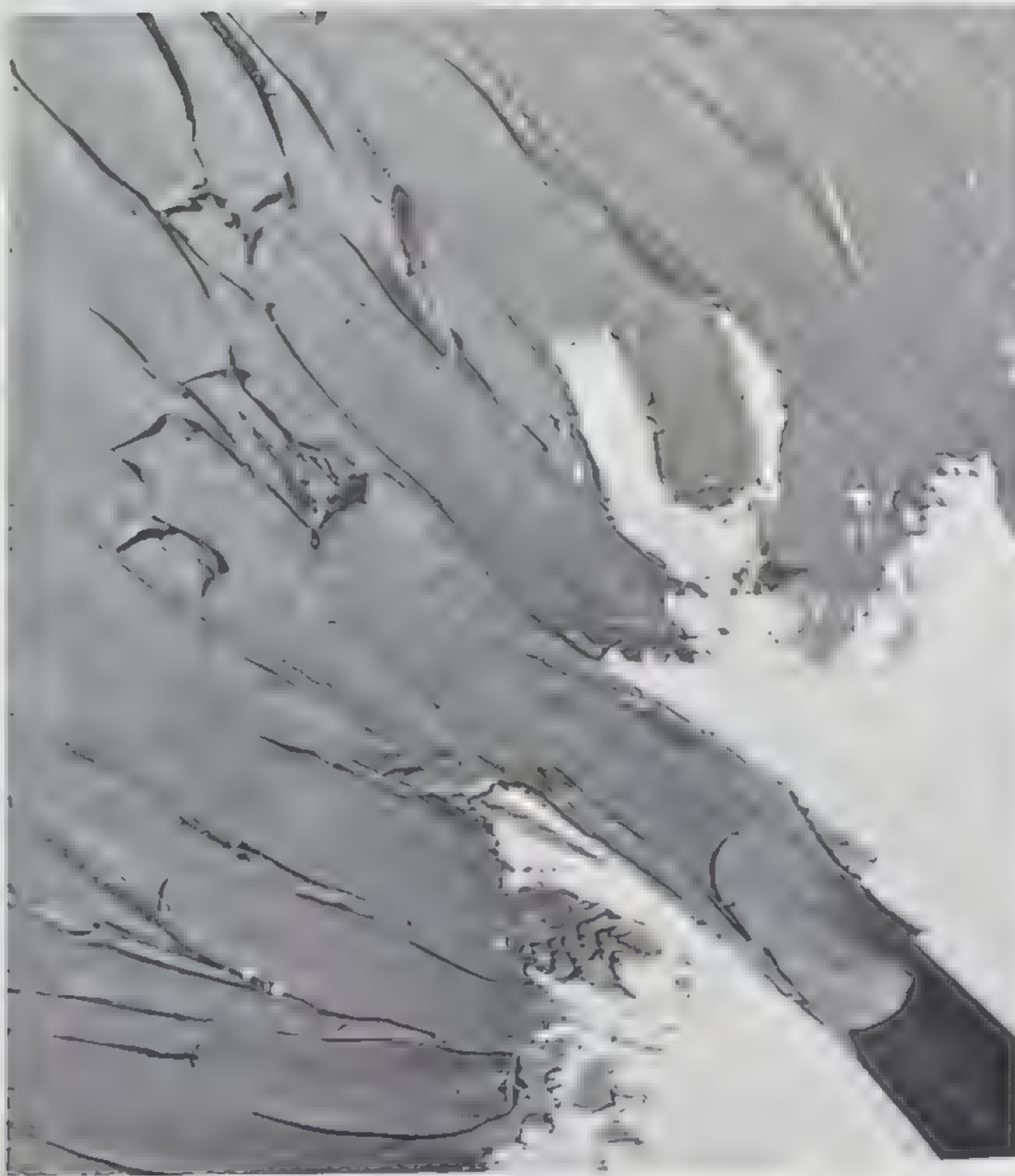
Palette knife

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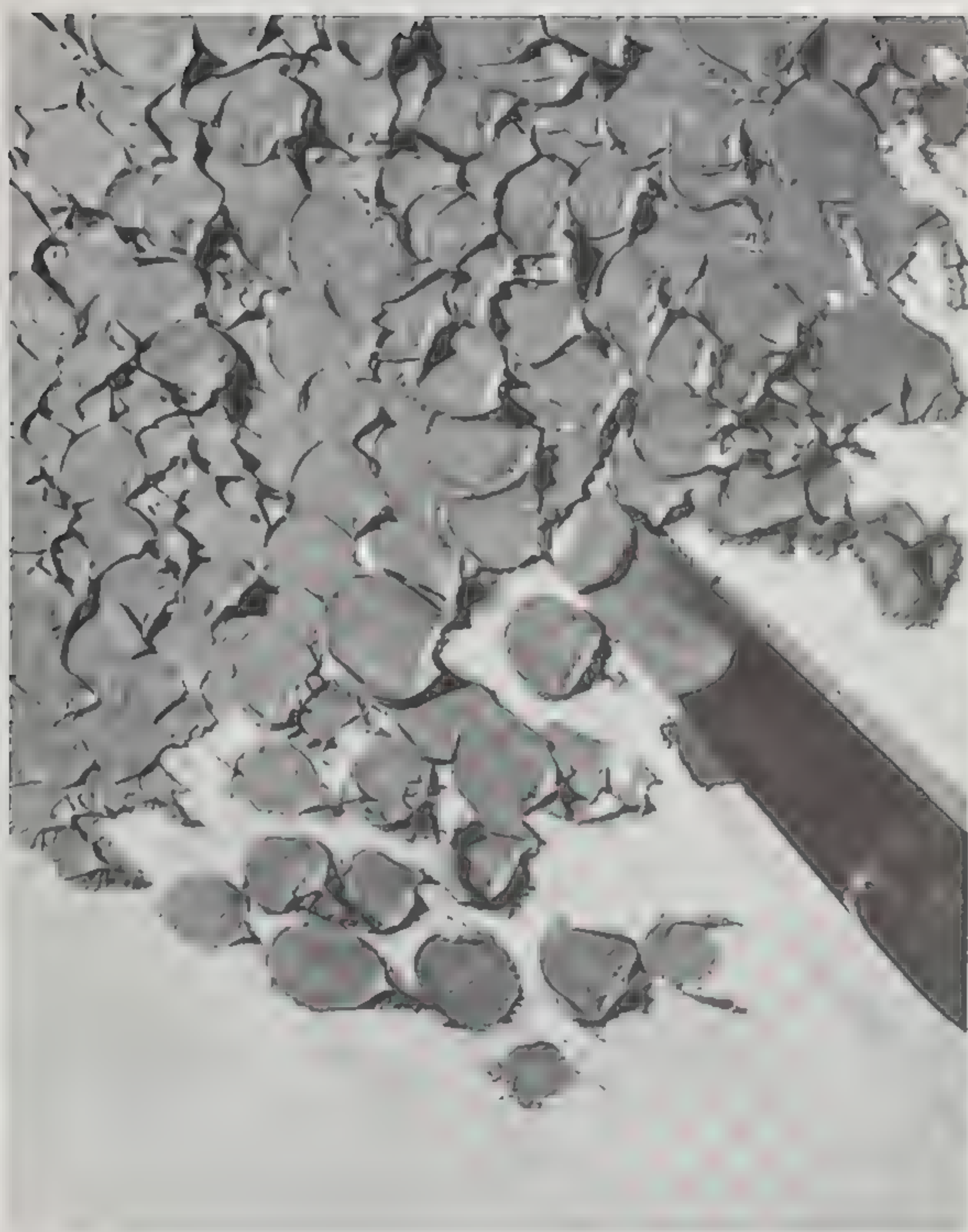


The paint is spread on like butter with the broad side of the palette knife; the practical way to cover large areas when painting with the knife.

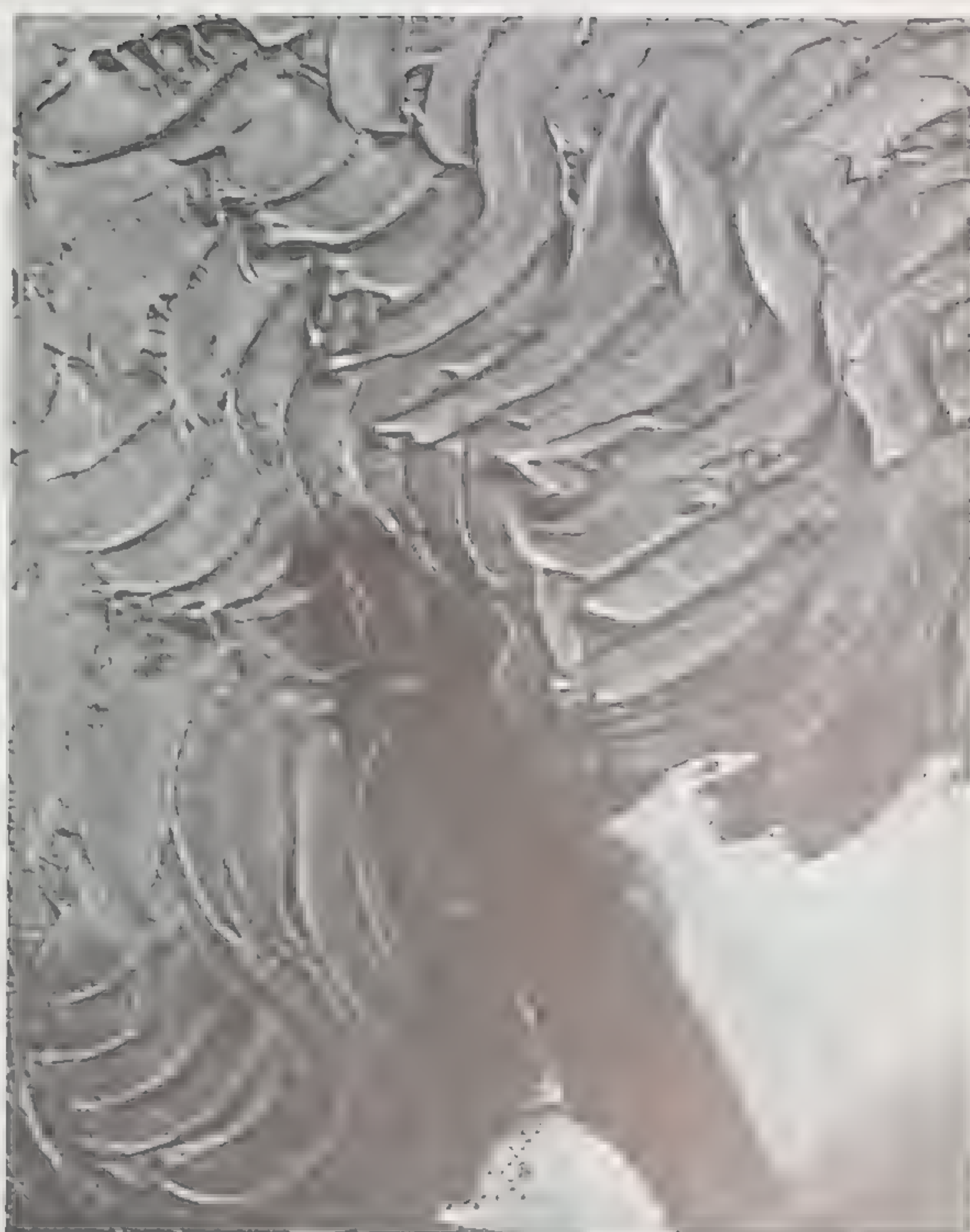
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Using the knife somewhat like a brush, the paint is applied with long strokes.



Small daubs of paint are applied with the tip of the knife in a pointillistic technique.



The knife, like the brush, can be used in any direction and here it is creating a pattern of curved lines. The knife is held at a slight angle to the surface and creates V-shaped ridges in the paint.



First a thick layer of paint is applied with the flat side of the knife. Then the point of the knife is scraped back and forth through the soft wet paint. The point is kept in contact with the canvas.



The paint is first spread on with the broad side of the palette knife. Then the edge of the knife scratches the thick paint with short rapid strokes to create the sharp serrated effect. The knife is lifted off after each stroke.

Blending with a knife

Blending edges

One of the main advantages of the oil medium is its wonderful *blending* quality. You can, if you wish, make the softest, most subtle edges very easily.

Remember, in blending edges, they should always be in character with the nature of your work. The smoothness of your paint does not imply "finish." As we show you, a bristle brush and palette knife will create different kinds of blends. Both are valid.

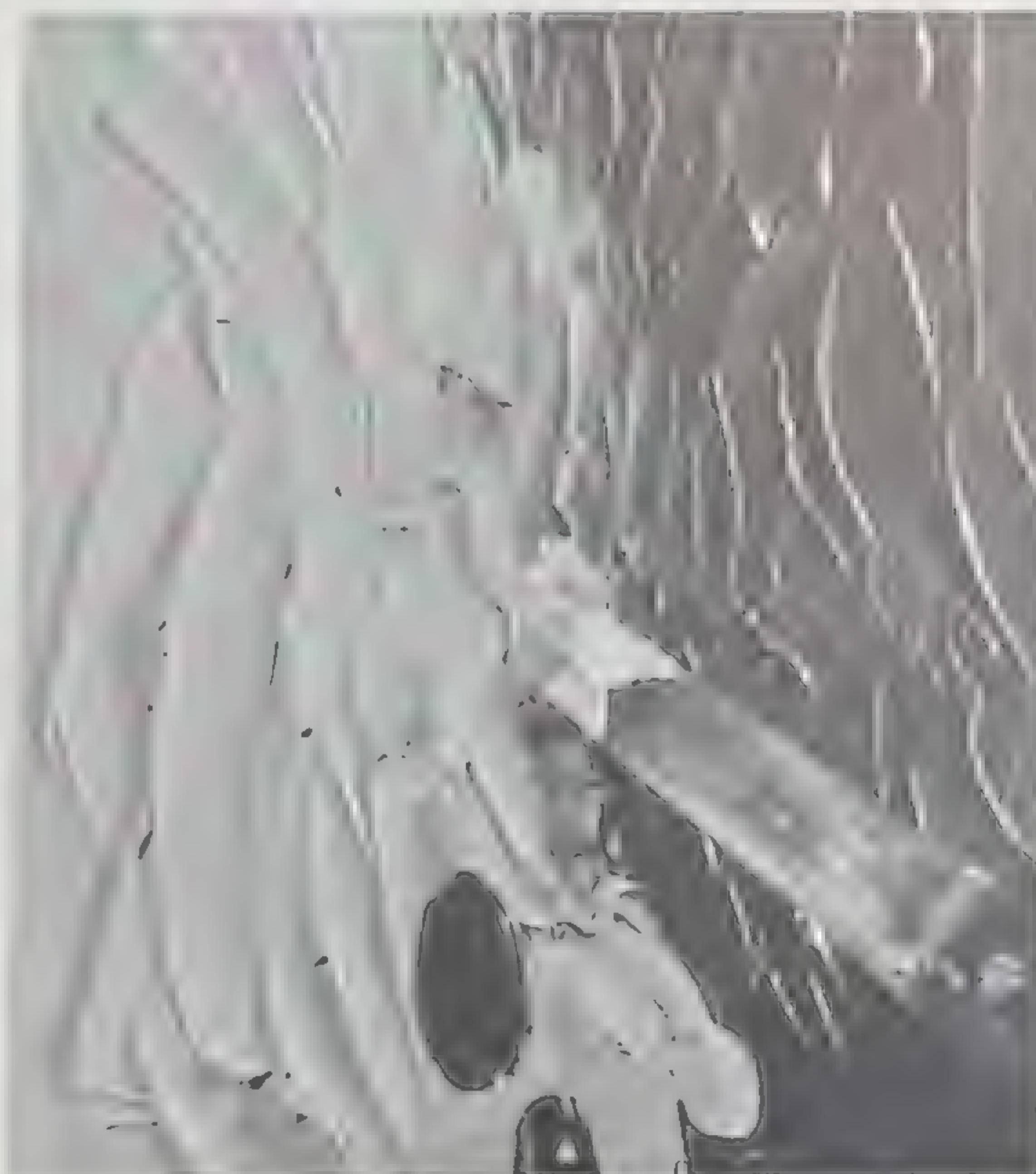
These pictures will demonstrate the simplest type of blending with the brush or knife. The two areas, one light and one dark, have been brushed together by directly mixing one tone with the other along the edge. This blending should be used between tones which have already been related to the adjacent tones. Actually, if your color relationships are correct you will need very little of this sort of blending to pull your picture together.



- 1** The first step in blending paint with the palette knife is to apply to the surface the two areas that you want blended. Run the two together as shown. Don't worry about the straightness of the edge and make no attempt to blend at the same time you are putting down the two areas.

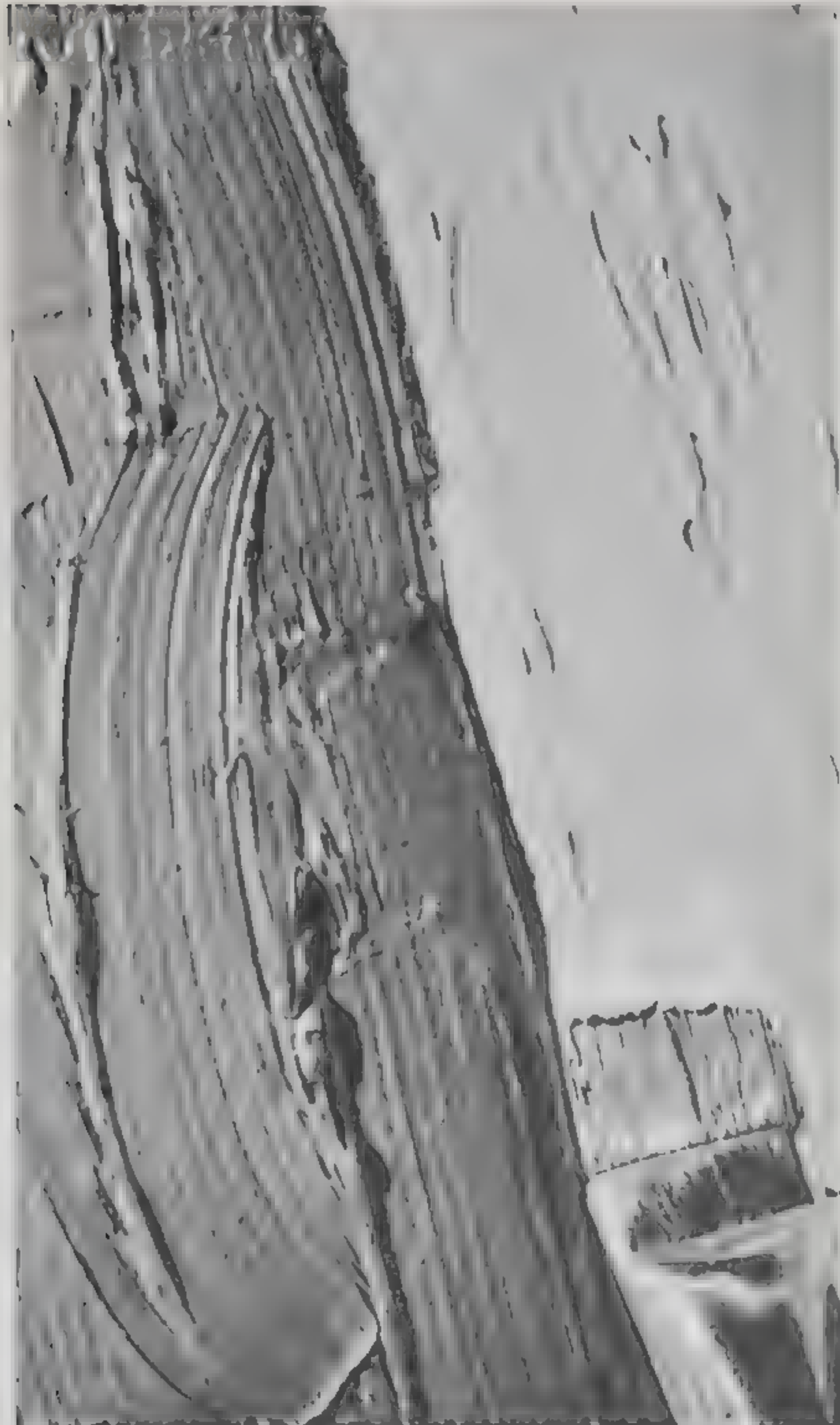


- 2** The next step is to paint some of the light tone into the dark tone and vice versa. This is the first step in creating the blended edge.



- 3** To make this edge complete simply repeat this process, alternately mixing tones along the edge into each other. Remember, however, that this type of blend should never attempt to duplicate the smooth technique of the brush. If you want a smooth blend use a brush; don't misuse the knife

Blending with a brush



- 1** The first step in blending an edge is to paint the two areas you are going to blend right up to each other. Let the paint overlap slightly. Don't try to make the lines straight or neat.



- 2** The next step is to drag your brush in a firm zigzag pattern right over the edge to be blended as shown.



- 3** Then moving your brush in strokes which are parallel to the edge, smooth out the edge as shown.



- 4** Further brushing will create this kind of a gradation or soft edge between the tones.



1

Each tool creates a different effect

Here are three paintings of the same apple, each painting done with a different tool. The first painting was done with a sable brush. All of the shapes, values and edges were applied and controlled with this tool. Because the sable brush was designed to create smooth, soft blends, the painting has that character.

The second painting done with bristle brush shows the marks of that tool. It does not have the smooth paint finish of the first picture, but contains the characteristic ridged strokes of the bristle brush.

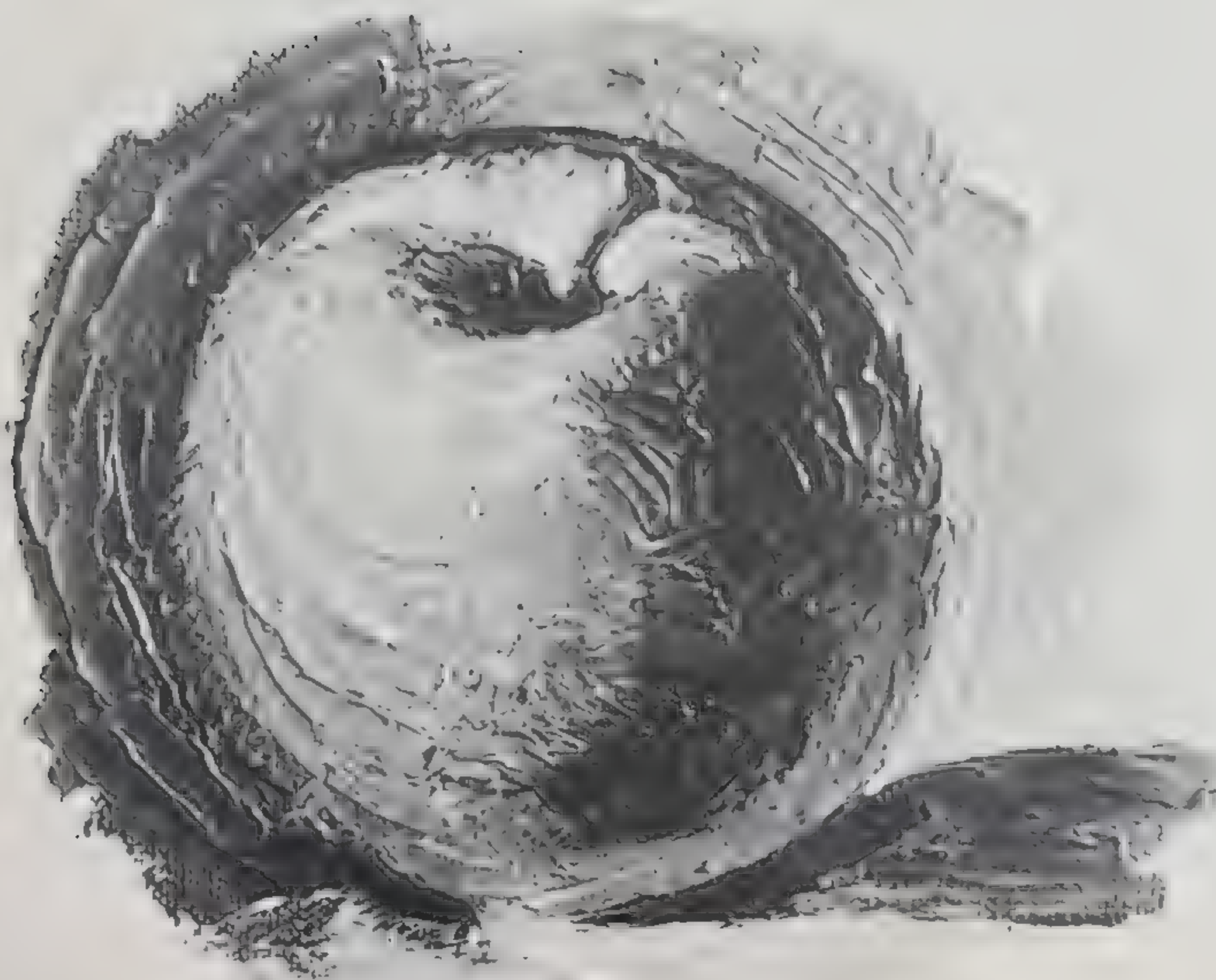
The third one is done entirely with a palette knife. You can see the characteristic marks left by that tool. Here again, despite the difference in surface appearance of the painting, the object looks like an apple because the shapes, values and edges have been duplicated even though this has been done in a much rougher way than the two preceding paintings.

From this demonstration you should realize that different tools leave characteristically different marks. None of these types of painting is *better* than the others — only *different*.



2.

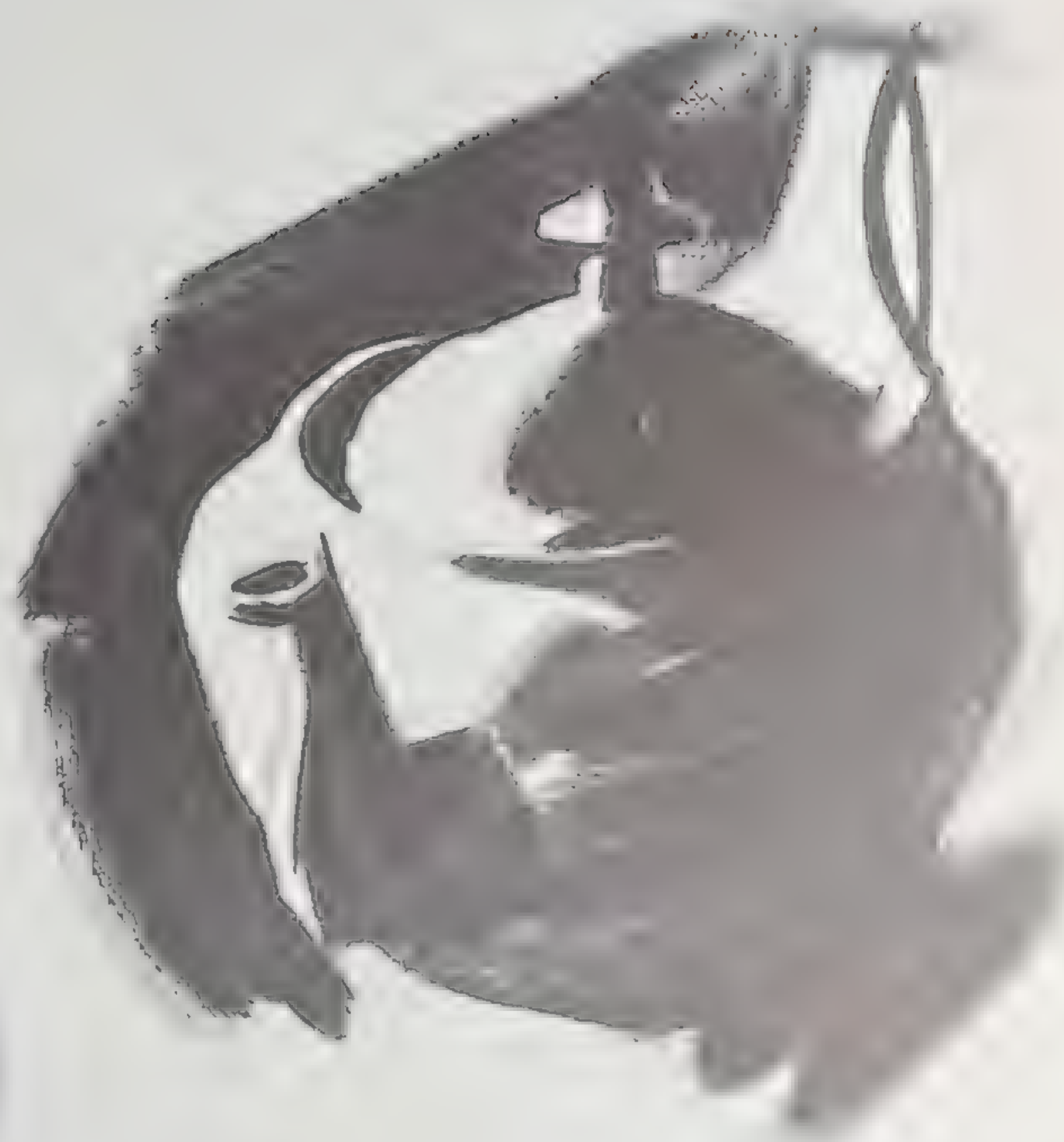
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3.

Three steps in painting

The three simple steps demonstrated in this oil painting of a teapot show you the basic principle of working from *dark to light*. You will find this method gives you the best control of the values in your painting.



Step 1

First, paint in all the dark areas you wish to include in your picture. Do this whether you see them on the object itself or in the background. Keep the paint for these shadows very thin.



Step 2

The second step is to add the half tones. The paint for these tones may be slightly thicker than that used for the shadows. These middle tones are brushed right into the edge of the shadows. Note that the shadows have also been lightened.



Step 3

Finally, we paint in the lights with still thicker paint. This pulls the whole painting together and allows us to accurately compare all the value relationships. The edges are sharpened or softened as required and the final accents are added.

Here is a photograph of the landscape we've chosen for our demonstration. It's very much the kind of scene you might come upon at any bend in a country road. There is a good deal of interesting picture material here — and that is precisely the painter's dilemma. Whenever you go to nature to paint, there is an overabundance of material. You must start to train your eye to select from the scene only those things which are important to your painting. The sketches below show you how to study a subject and examine it from different viewpoints to eliminate the extraneous things and focus attention upon a main theme.



Painting a landscape in oil

On the next few pages you will see a demonstration of how to make a painting in oil. We wish to make it clear that what you are about to study is not a set of hard-and-fast rules. Our purpose is rather to show you one sound approach and to give you some practical information on handling oil paint.

This demonstration is presented in steps because any good painting progresses through a series of orderly stages. Otherwise, making a painting can become a frustrating chore instead of the enjoyable creative accomplishment it should be. The principle is to work from generalities to details. Broadly speaking, these are the phases any painting goes through: (1) Placing the darks. (2) Adding the middle tones. (3) Painting in the lights. (4) Pulling the painting together. (5) Adding the finishing details.

Establishing a good working procedure is very important. As you will see, the approach is to move from thin underpainting to thicker paint as you progress toward the final stages. This allows you to make changes in color and value rather easily.

Before you even pick up a brush, sit down and "tune in" on the scene before you. What you are about to do is set down on canvas your own emotional reaction to what you see. This requires a close and sympathetic relation between you and the forms you are about to interpret, the surface on which you will work, and the paint you will use.

You have already learned that any subject is made up of shapes, values, and edges which you must interpret on your canvas. As you study your landscape, ask yourself some questions. Here are a few you might try: Where is the lightest light in the

scene — the darkest dark? How light is the grass compared to the sky? How dark is the doorway in relation to the end of the barn, the tree, and the road? If you answer these and similar questions before you begin to paint, the whole process will go along much more smoothly and enjoyably.

The best way to control values is to start with the darkest tones, add the middle tones, and finally the lights. However, even though you put down these values as accurately as you can, you must expect to make changes and adjustments of value all along the way. You will find that every added value tends to change the relationship of the values around it. As you add color, gradually eliminating the tone of the canvas, you will make adjustments to attain the value relationships in the real scene.

When you paint, try to feel you are actually moving into the scene in depth with your brush, looking and working from near objects to far ones, from things away from you to things closer to you. Never think of yourself as working from top to bottom or side to side. This attitude will help you capture the solid feeling of the objects you are painting.

The most important thing we want you to get from this demonstration is an understanding of the approach. To sum up: In making an oil painting, work from dark to light. Paint broadly at first, saving details till last. Build up your forms with the brush, following the contours of the forms. Work with the feeling that you are painting forms that exist in depth.

We hope this demonstration will open your eyes to the full enjoyment you can experience in making a painting from nature.

Making the preliminary pencil sketches



1 Before beginning to paint, make a number of rough sketches to find out what you want to include in the painting and how you plan to arrange it. In this first sketch we walked around to the right of the barn in the photograph above. The interest here is too equally divided between the tree and the barn.



2 By moving around to the front of the barn, we get more of the feeling that first attracted us to the subject. Even though we've minimized the trees somewhat in our sketch, the building is dominated too much by its surroundings. The composition is too scattered.



3 Here's the best sketch. We've shifted our viewpoint slightly to the right and moved in on the barn so that it is now the most important form in the picture. This is the view we will use for the painting. Working out your compositional problems and value pattern in preliminary sketches avoids trouble later on.



1 Toning the canvas

As a first step, most artists tone their canvas. The tone provides a middle value to relate color to and makes it easier to adjust values as we go along. Colors put down on a pure white surface seem too dark, creating a temptation to lighten them too much.

To tone your canvas, squeeze some oil color on your palette (we've used burnt umber). With a rag soaked in turpentine, rub a dab of color into your canvas. Keep the mixture mostly turpentine and rub the canvas almost dry.

With a small bristle brush and burnt umber, we rough in our major forms. We concentrate on the placement of forms, the large relationships — not on details.



2 Laying in

Thin, dark colors are painted in the shadow areas with a large brush. Exact color is not important yet, but local color is suggested — deep green for foliage, brown for old barn siding, a thin wash of blue for the roof and the shadow in the sky. When you are painting outdoors, the early stages should be done rather quickly before the sun moves and the light changes radically. Keep your paint — almost a water-color consistency — these first lay-ins.



3 Laying in

Now we begin to lay in the middle tones. We're not worried if one area overlaps another. Notice that the darkest areas — the shadow in the large tree and the darks in the barn — are now indicated. They will help us select the right values for the rest of the painting.

At this stage you can see the value of toning your canvas and working thinly from dark to light. The large pole on the right paralleled the picture border, creating a static line, so a new one was painted in quickly and easily over the old. Also with the major dark areas indicated, the lighter areas of the barn, sky, and road fall approximately into place — even though they are still only toned canvas.



4 Laying in

Still working at covering the canvas, we continue to lay in our middle tones with a fairly large bristle brush. There's no need to match the exact values in our subject. It's enough to approximate these relationships; we can make finer adjustments later, when the canvas is covered.

As we lay in the sky, roughly indicating the shape of cloud and cloud shadow, we spot some sky color in the big tree where the sky shows through the leaves. You'll notice, too, that some of the lighter color of the mountain is carried down into the trees. This is important. When the trees are further developed there will be a feeling of "seeing through" which will add to the airiness of the foliage.



This is an actual-size reproduction of strokes and thickness of paint. The dark area under the tree in the painting is 12 x 16 in.



Though the paint is kept thin — almost like water color in consistency — even in these early stages the brush strokes follow the contour of the landscape, as in this re-creation of the foreground grass area.

5 Completed lay-in

Now practically all the canvas is covered and we are ready to refine and adjust value and color relationships. The front of the barn should eventually be a light, warm gray with a feeling of weathered paint. We start by laying in a cool gray over the front of the barn. We'll work over it later with warmer, lighter color. Painting a light, warm color over a relatively cooler, darker one will add vibrancy and life to the light-struck areas.

Even at this preliminary stage you should lay in each tone with the type of stroke appropriate for the object. Brush in these tones with sensitivity to the different materials they represent. Remember — the tree grows, the road winds, the clouds drift or float, and the distant hills roll onward. Imagine how dull, lifeless, and uninspiring these shapes would be if we had carefully painted in every area with flat values, as though everything were made of the same stuff.

Nature is not something posing lifeless in a glass case. Nature is varied, alive, moving. Paint it that way.



6 Pulling the picture together

At this point we begin to make changes, refine textures, and strive to create the feeling of depth and atmosphere we want. It is now that we compare values accurately for the first time and start pulling the painting together. This almost always leads to some changes. For example, we have lightened the shadow on the left side of the barn where the ground reflects a fairly strong light up against it. We have also lightened the sky. At first we were awed by the cloud forms, but as they moved it became clear that this area would be better if it were simplified and lightened.



This detail shows you how the thicker pigment is laid on over the thin underpainting in the middle stages.



Once the basic we can begin thicker color that there is texture yet the general di



7 Pulling the picture together

With most of the light areas set, we continue to pull the picture together. One of the areas we work on is the large mass of trees, where we overpaint the thin, dark color with a warmer, lighter, thicker green. We use a variety of greens, and the thicker paint over the thin, dark, transparent passages assures us of a leafy, light, foliage-like quality. Now is a good time to stop and study the picture carefully to see what it needs: (1) The clouds need softening. (2) The foreground shadow is too dark. (3) The big tree needs more form.

These changes and those in Step 6 are typical of the adjustments you will want to make in developing any painting. Keep your whole approach flexible enough to take such changes in your stride. This will be easy if you avoid adding detail until the value relationships are properly adjusted.



8 Final stages

Textures of the individual areas become important now. We break a variety of warm, light colors over the front of the barn — now it's beginning to have the character we're after. The road, foreground grass and the trees are also worked on with color and textural variations.

In adding detail in these final stages we must exercise special caution. This is a painting, an impression. We must be careful not to paint in everything that we know occurs. For an example of what we mean, look at the barn. You know that there are dozens of boards in the end wall, but can you see them all? No. Only enough texture is shown to suggest them



As this swatch illustrates, most of the underpainting with the thicker paint begins to take on a bo



Here is an actual-size re-creation of the grass in the later stages. The paint is not only thicker — the color is more varied and the combination of strokes more grasslike. Notice the variety of strokes — from broad and thick to thin and spiky — and how this creates a feeling of the haphazard way in which grass of this type grows.

9 Final stages

Now we get down to careful refinement of the shapes, values, and edges. The painting may be considered finished when this has been done, except for the final touches shown on the opposite page.

The smaller tools — the pointed and square-tipped sable brush and the small bristle brush — can be used to good advantage at this time. We handle them in any way that form and texture seem to call for. They may be used edgewise or flat, vertically or horizontally.

At this point, we paint in the details which add character, such as the lightning rods, fences, posts. There is a small piece of machinery in front of the barn — we put it in to see if it will enhance our picture. No more is added than the eye actually sees.





10 Adding the finishing details

Here is the finished painting. It differs from the last stage only slightly. There are no radical changes; if any big adjustments had been needed, it would mean that the previous steps had been handled incorrectly at some point. This stage simply shows a series of refinements reflecting personal taste. Largely, it's a matter of altering values slightly here and there, softening up or accenting edges, adding a few crisp touches to pull certain areas into focus, and painting in such minor details as the small blades of grass in the foreground.

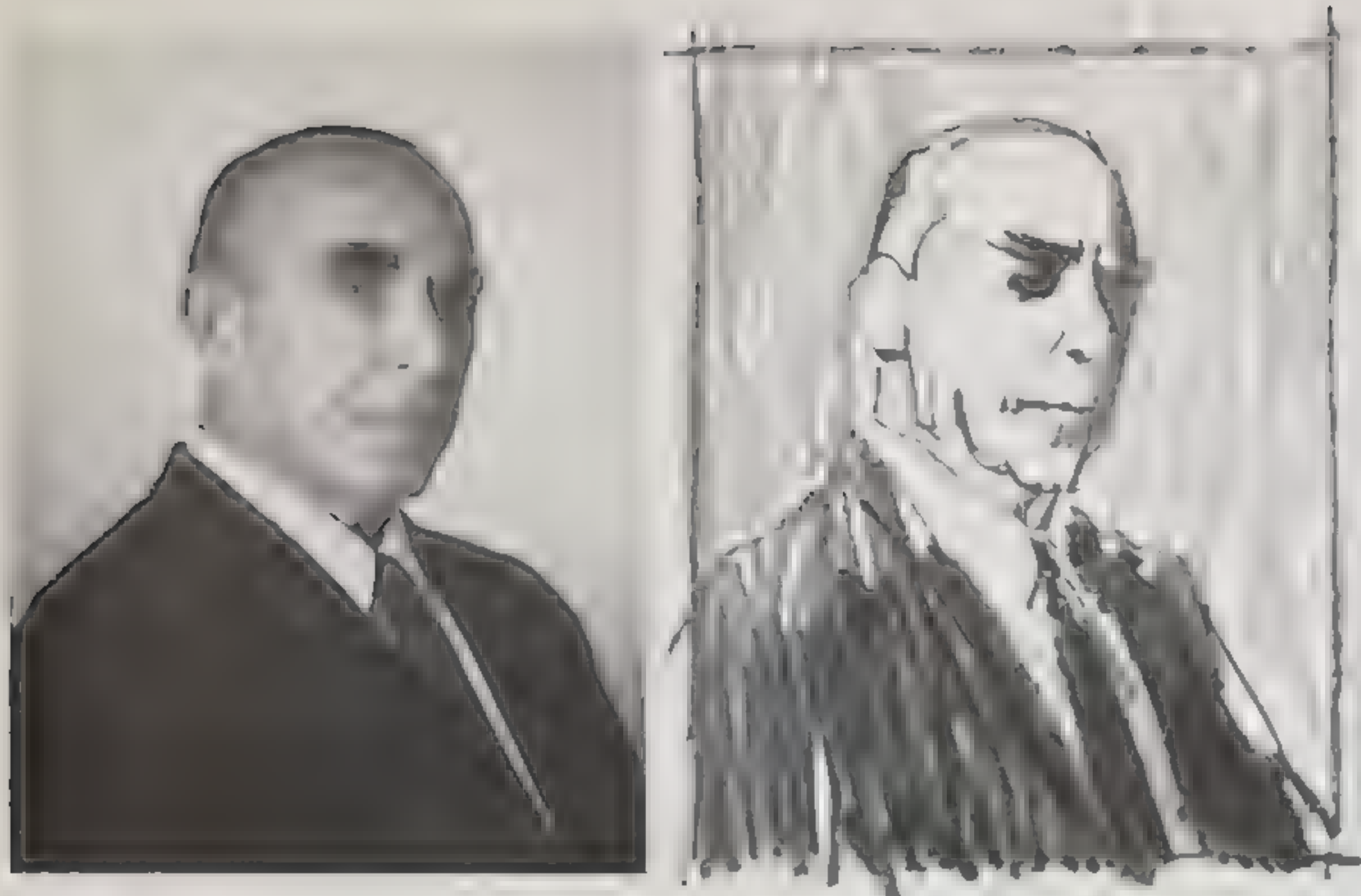
The biggest change, of course, is in the shape of the mountain. In the final analysis the mountain and cloud forms had seemed to lean to the right and pull the eye out of the composition. A slight shift of the mountain's high point to the left corrected this.

The machinery we thought might be such a nice touch turned out to be a distraction, so we painted it out and settled for a few barrels and a post to create interest without clutter.

We opened up the shadows on the road in the foreground by introducing some dark textural accents which create a feeling of luminosity. A few final flickering light accents on the post and the trees in the distance and the painting is finished.

Looking back over the experience of making this painting, it is clear that the most important factor in the whole process is control – control of values, textures, and the pigment itself. Real control can come only with experience. The more you paint, the better your control will grow. Remember the principles we have shown you. Work from dark to light, and leave details and minor adjustments till last. If you adopt a simple, commonsense approach like this, doing first things first, you will soon be making pictures you can be proud of.

There are no hard-and-fast rules for how to proceed in making a painting. The method we have shown you in these pages is only one approach. As you gain confidence you'll arrive at your own ways of doing things. However, it is important to follow a logical and orderly procedure such as the one we demonstrate here.



Painting a portrait in oil

Portrait painting can be one of the most pleasurable and meaningful of artistic endeavors. On the following pages, we demonstrate one good way to approach your portrait painting.

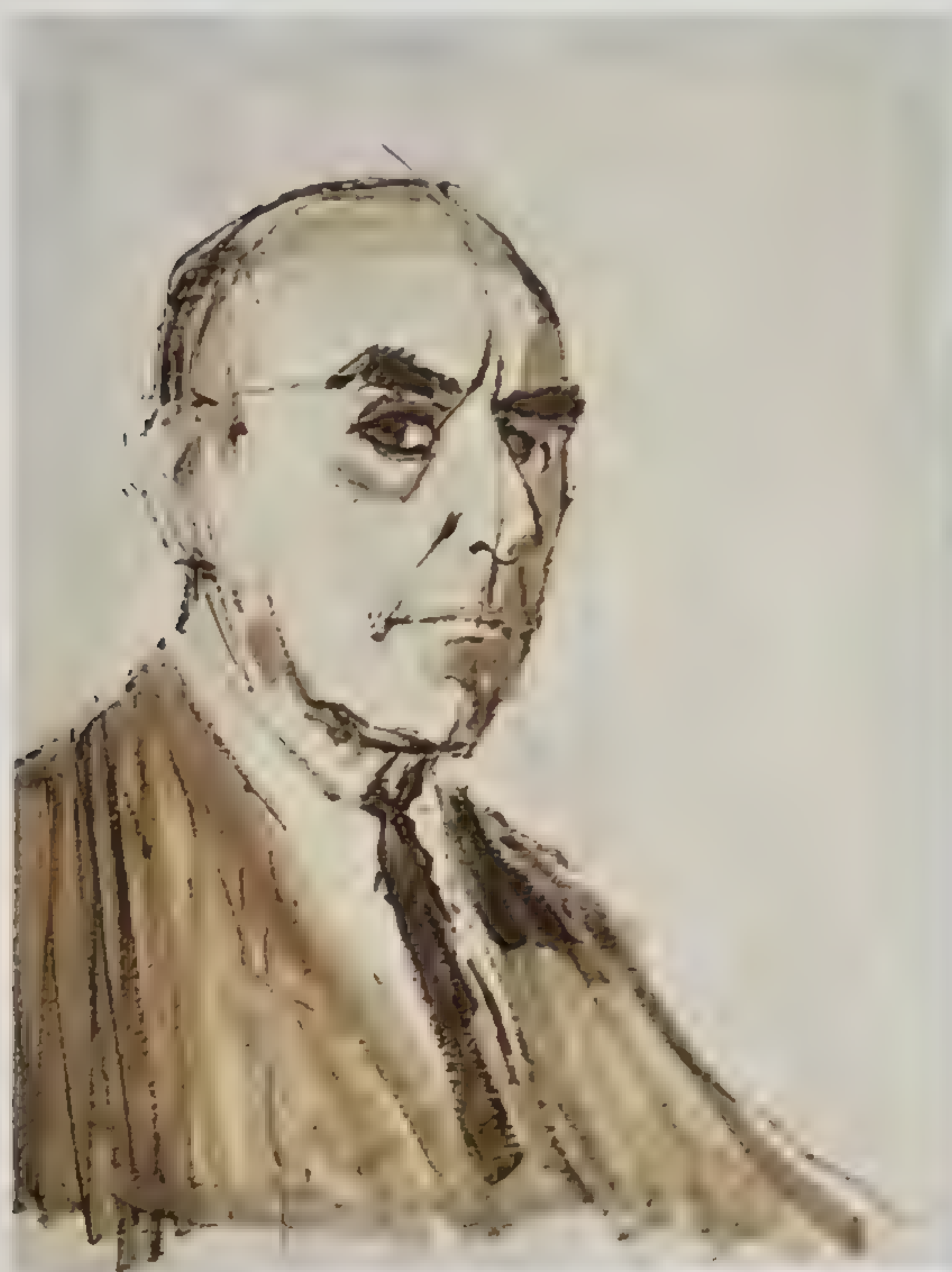
Here we shall show you how to apply to painting a portrait the procedures you learned in the landscape demonstration. You'll observe—and this is a vital point—that the considerations of value, color, composition, and texture are much the same as in the landscape.

For our subject we've chosen Albert Dorne, Founder of your School. The photograph above shows the pose and simple lighting we're using. The lighting models the head well, giving it a strong feeling of solid form. This kind of simple lighting is one of the best for you to use in a portrait. The sketch we've reproduced shows the value pattern we will use.



1 Drawing in the head

First we tone the canvas with a thin turpentine wash of raw umber and cerulean blue. Then we sketch in the head as a simple basic egg form. We place the features as accurately as possible in relation to one another, but don't draw them in detail. We concentrate on establishing the proportions of the large forms.



2 Laying in the darks

In umber we indicate the main shadow areas of the head to build its solid form and establish the over-all value pattern. We need not worry about exact color yet. Careful study shows us that the dark accents of the tie and distinctive eyebrows will be important in the final painting, so we roughly paint them now. They will help us key our values as we go along.



3 Laying in the middle and light tones

Our major concern is still with establishing the solidity of the head. We paint the halftone and light areas broadly, indicating the large planes in values and colors that come fairly close to those of our subject. We're still not too concerned with exact color. We keep the planes simple and avoid any tendency to become finicky or too involved with detail.



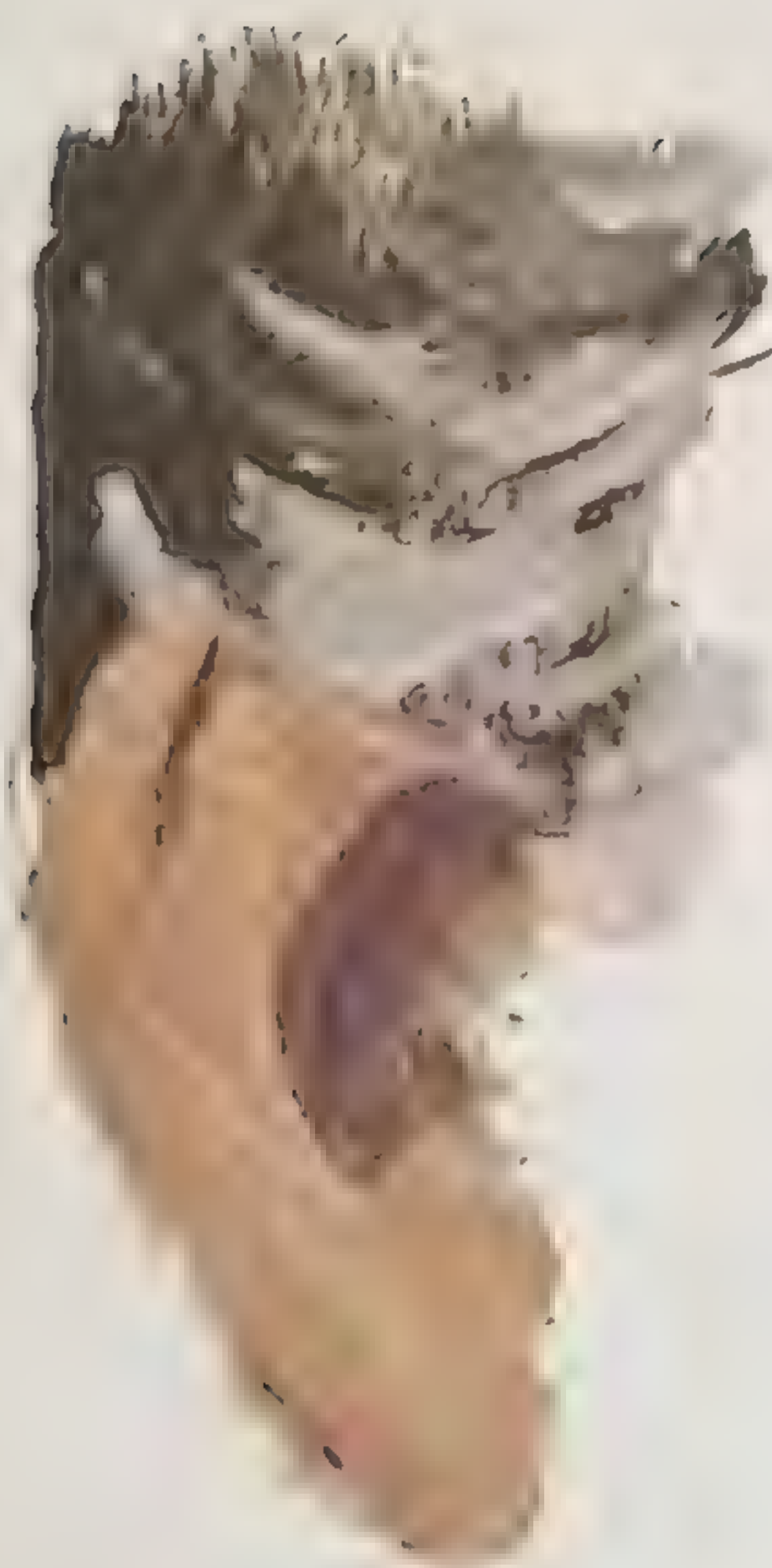
4 Completed lay-in

Let's take a careful look at what we've accomplished so far. The major planes are stated, and we've begun to turn some of the smaller forms like those along the jaw line and around the mouth and eyes. Before we carry the head too far, we brush in some of the background color so we can relate the color of the head to the surrounding areas. The background colors are cooler shades of blue and gray which will work to set off the warmer colors in the flesh. Also at this point we lay in the dark blue of the coat and a dark value for the tie, to further establish the value pattern.

Now we begin to sharpen up some of the drawing which will help create the likeness of our sitter.

(Caution: Don't pin down the drawing too much yet!) Notice how the background color is used to define the edge of the shadow side of the head. This edge becomes harder and has more crisp contrast where the cheekbone comes close to the surface, but it remains soft in the fleshy areas around the mouth. This variety of edge treatment not only adds interest and vitality, it also gives a greater feeling of reality and form to the head.

The touch of gray is added to the hair. At this stage, it's little more than a color reminder; in later stages we'll refine this area and give it more of the character we want. Now we're ready to start pulling the painting together.



In this full-size replica of the ear at this stage, notice how the brush strokes seem to flow with the form they're describing. Also notice how simply the complex form of the ear is presented. This area won't be carried much further in the final painting.

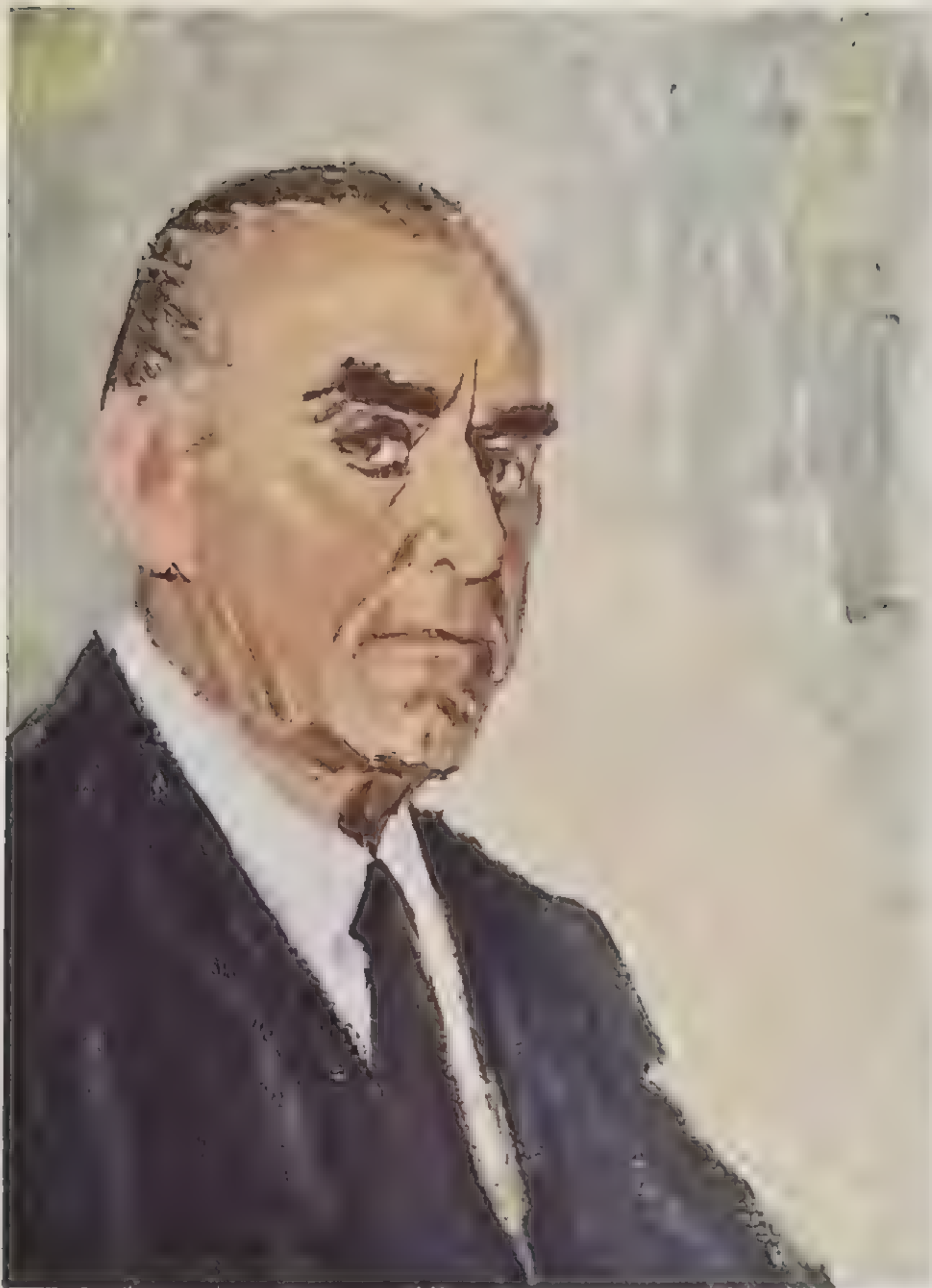


5 Pulling the painting together

With the major areas blocked in we work all over the picture, changing, adjusting, and modifying color, value, and texture.

Darker values in the background help set off the color and value of the head. We bring the head along by modeling some of the smaller forms like the ear and the area around the nose and mouth. We introduce some dark color variations in the jacket and lay in the light value of the shirt. Along the top of the head, we pull some warm flesh color from the forehead into the hair. The soft line created is more realistic and avoids a hard-edged skullcap look, common in beginners' portraits

The painting is still a very broad, fluid statement. It's important to keep the entire picture moving along at much the same state of development. Avoid the temptation to finish up any single area or feature. This is one of the most common pitfalls for newcomers to portraiture. They finish an eye, for example, and then, because they're afraid to "lose it," spend hours painting the area around it. If you find yourself in this trap, screw up your courage, take a large brush, and paint out the finished part. You'll be amazed how free you'll feel to continue your portrait — and if you've painted that eye once, you can do it again



6 Refining form

Now we begin to work on the refinements. Between the previous stage and this, we have worked only on the head. The word to keep in mind as you go through the stages shown on this page is *restraint*. As you can see, we've painted the small planes of light and shadow which model the subtle changes of form in areas like the eyes, nose, and chin. Adjustments in value and color are still being made. Compare the shadow under the lip with the same area in Step 5. See how we've lightened it. We've done the same to the dark accent on the right cheekbone.



In this full-size detail of the mouth and chin area you can see that even at this late stage the modeling is very simple and direct, yet there is a strong sense of reality.

Here is an actual-size detail of the mouth and chin area carried somewhat further. The strength of the form and structure is still very apparent even though the modeling has become more subtle.



7 Further refinements

We're closing in now on the final stages. The background has been worked on some more, with changes of value and color to create a feeling of space behind the head. On the head itself, we've further modeled the form, always being careful that the refinement of the smaller planes doesn't destroy the over-all feeling of solidity we've tried so hard to create.

Notice particularly how the hair is handled. You'll remember we did some work in this area in previous steps. Now, with a few strokes of a small brush, it's finished. Study the progression in this area carefully. In all of your portraits, try to *suggest* the texture of your sitter's hair. Don't attempt to duplicate it stroke for stroke. Now we're ready to stop and study the whole picture very carefully to see what, if anything, remains to be done.





8 The finished painting

The main refinement needed after Step 7 was in the drawing along the left cheekbone. With the addition of a little reflected light in the shadow around the mouth and a bit more texture in Mr. Dorne's hair and eyebrows the likeness is complete.

As we continue to study the picture, however, we feel the lower half is a little flat and monochromatic. We lighten very subtly the top of the right shoulder to add some bulk and round the form. Changing the color of the tie to a deep maroon adds important color variety to the painting's lower half.

Now the portrait is finished. These brush strokes in the last stages can make or break the work. If the

likeness is good and the head well drawn, these last strokes may merely create another good factual recording of the face. However, if the likeness is good and the head well drawn, *and* the artist has established rapport with his subject, the portrait may become something more. Spirit and feeling are necessary in all paintings, but especially in portraiture. The spirit and feeling with which you approach the painting and your skill in capturing your sitter's personality can breathe life into a portrait. When you succeed in this, you'll know why painters say portraiture is difficult but the satisfaction of creating a fine portrait is well worth the effort.

Varnishing

You will be concerned when painting in oil with two types of varnish, one used during the painting itself and the other applied as a final picture varnish.

The varnish you will find useful during the painting process is called retouching varnish. You will notice as you paint in oils that frequently parts of your picture will dry out or appear to sink in and look much duller than the surrounding areas. This is unavoidable because some of the paints are going to dry more rapidly than others. However, you can eliminate this effect by spraying onto your painting surface a light coat of retouch varnish which restores these sunken areas to their original value and gives them the same shine and luster they had when the paint was applied. Value relationships, of course, are all important in painting and for this reason you should use retouch varnish whenever parts of your painting become dull or sunk in.

The other type of varnish should be used *after* the painting has been completed and is thoroughly dry. This varnish is damar picture varnish. It should be put on with a clean varnish brush in long vertical strokes running from the top to the bottom of the picture. Varnishing of this type should be done in a *dry* atmosphere. Avoid varnishing on a rainy day. You will also find that warming the paint surface slightly by setting the canvas in the sun or holding it next to a radiator for a minute or two will help to eliminate bubbles which might otherwise form as you brush on the varnish.

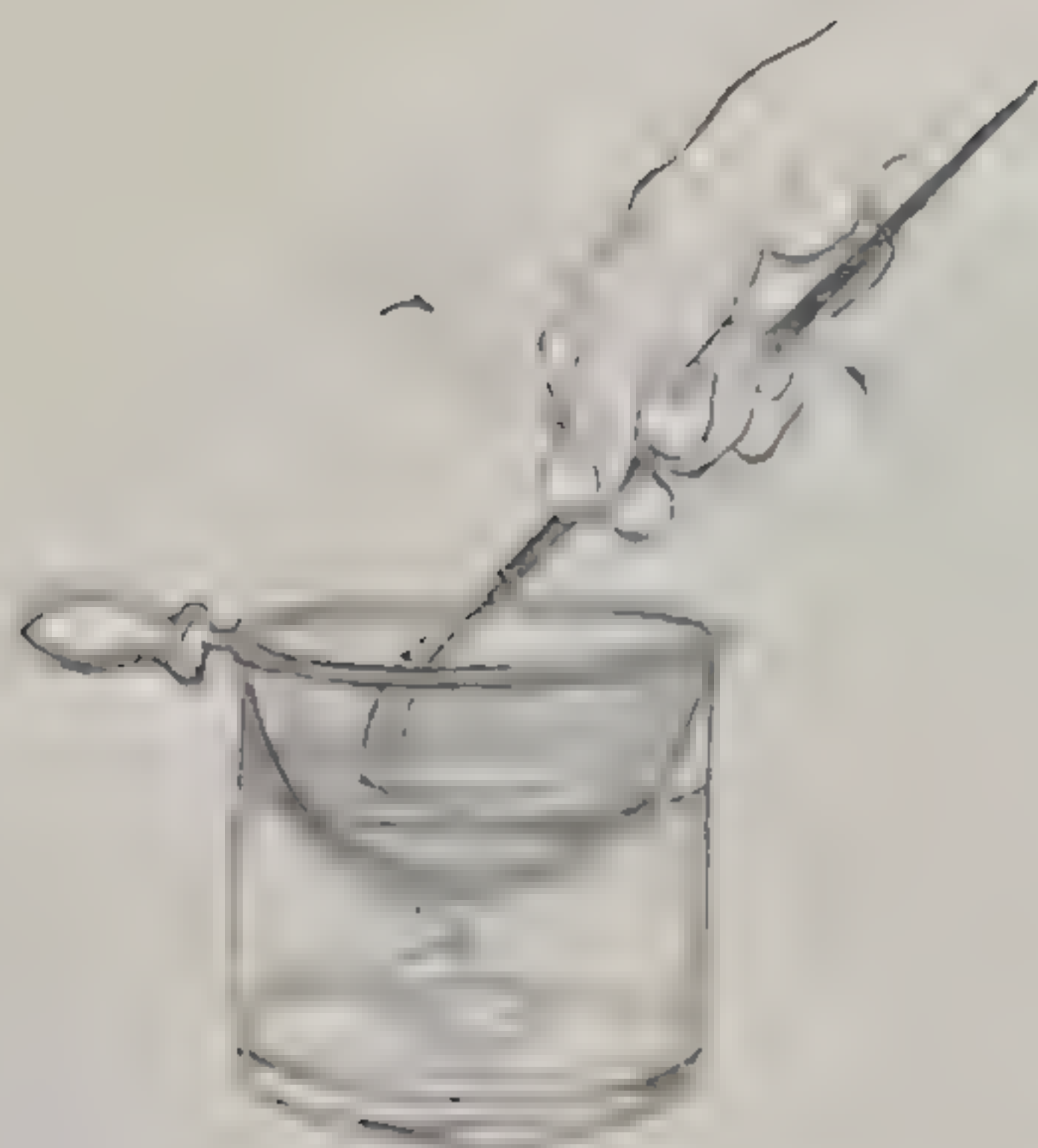
Care of equipment

Whenever you finish your day's work you should make sure that your tools are going to be in condition to use the following day. One of the most important things to look after are your brushes. These should be cleaned after each painting session. A brush cleaner with a wire screen will help to keep your brushes in good condition. These can be bought ready-made or you can make one by simply fitting a kitchen sieve tightly into a can. This can is then filled with turpentine above the level of the bottom of the sieve. The brush can be scrubbed against the sieve, the paint falling through it and settling to the bottom of the can. This will remove most of the paint, but you should follow this with a thorough washing of each brush with soap and warm water. Scrub the brush over a cake of soap and then lather it up well in the palm of your hand. Rinse the brush in warm water and wipe it dry.

If you don't intend to use the paint that's left on your palette for several days you can keep it from drying by pressing small squares of cellophane down over the piles of color.

Keep a pair of pliers handy to remove any caps that may stick to the tubes and always replace the caps after squeezing out your color.

Don't pile your paintings on top of each other. Warm weather will soften the varnish on their surface and cause them to stick together. Instead, store them vertically so that just the top edge of each picture rests against the back of the one in front of it.



Your brushes should look like this — not like this.

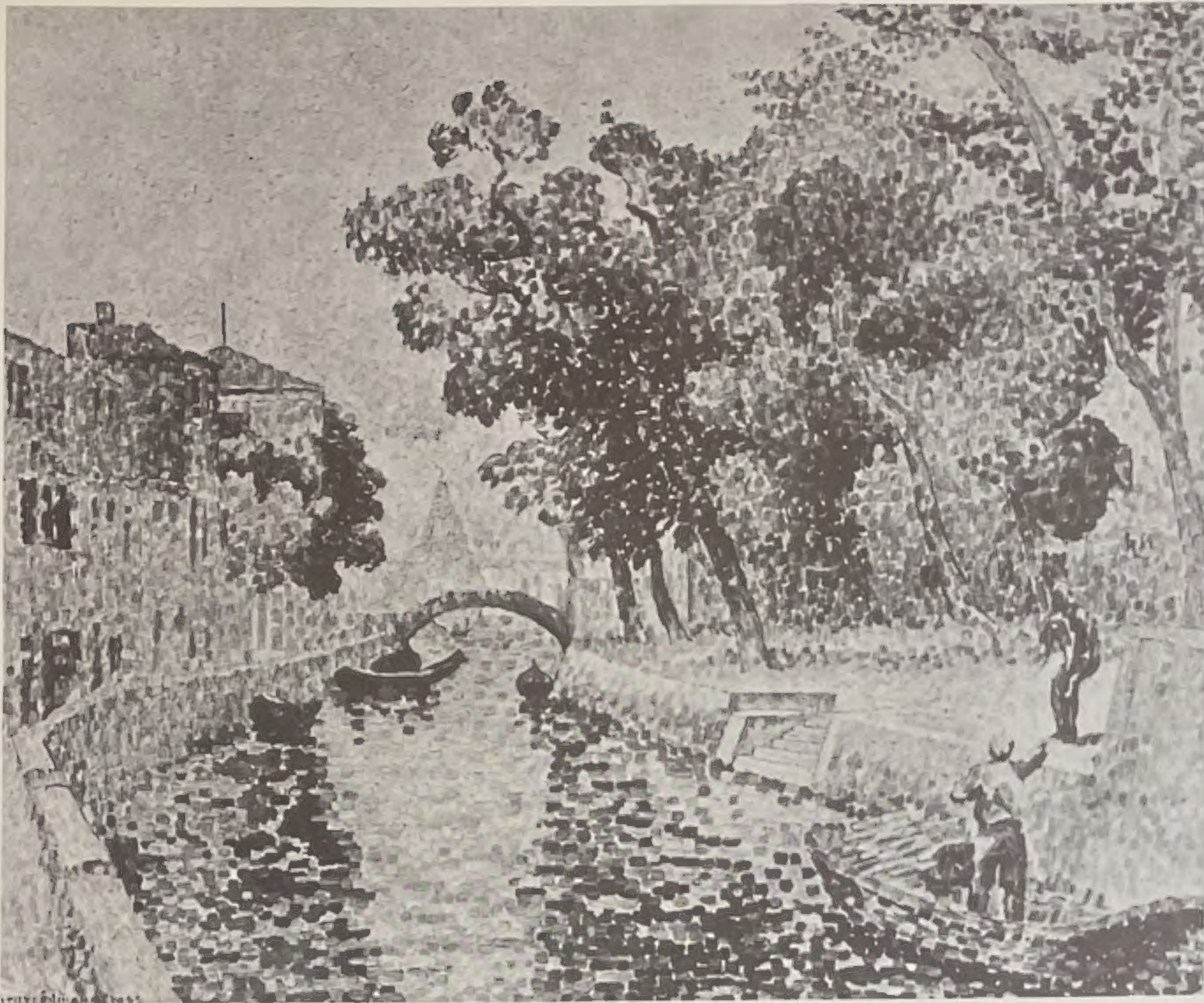


LESTER RONDELL. In the Museum

For the most part this painting was done directly with a flexible palette knife. As you can see clearly in the detail of the head, the pigment has been laid on in a thick impasto. The impress of the knife blade is obvious, and creates a rich textural effect. The area behind the head has been scraped down fairly smooth with the blade of the knife to provide an unobtrusive background against which the head will stand out.



Coll. Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo

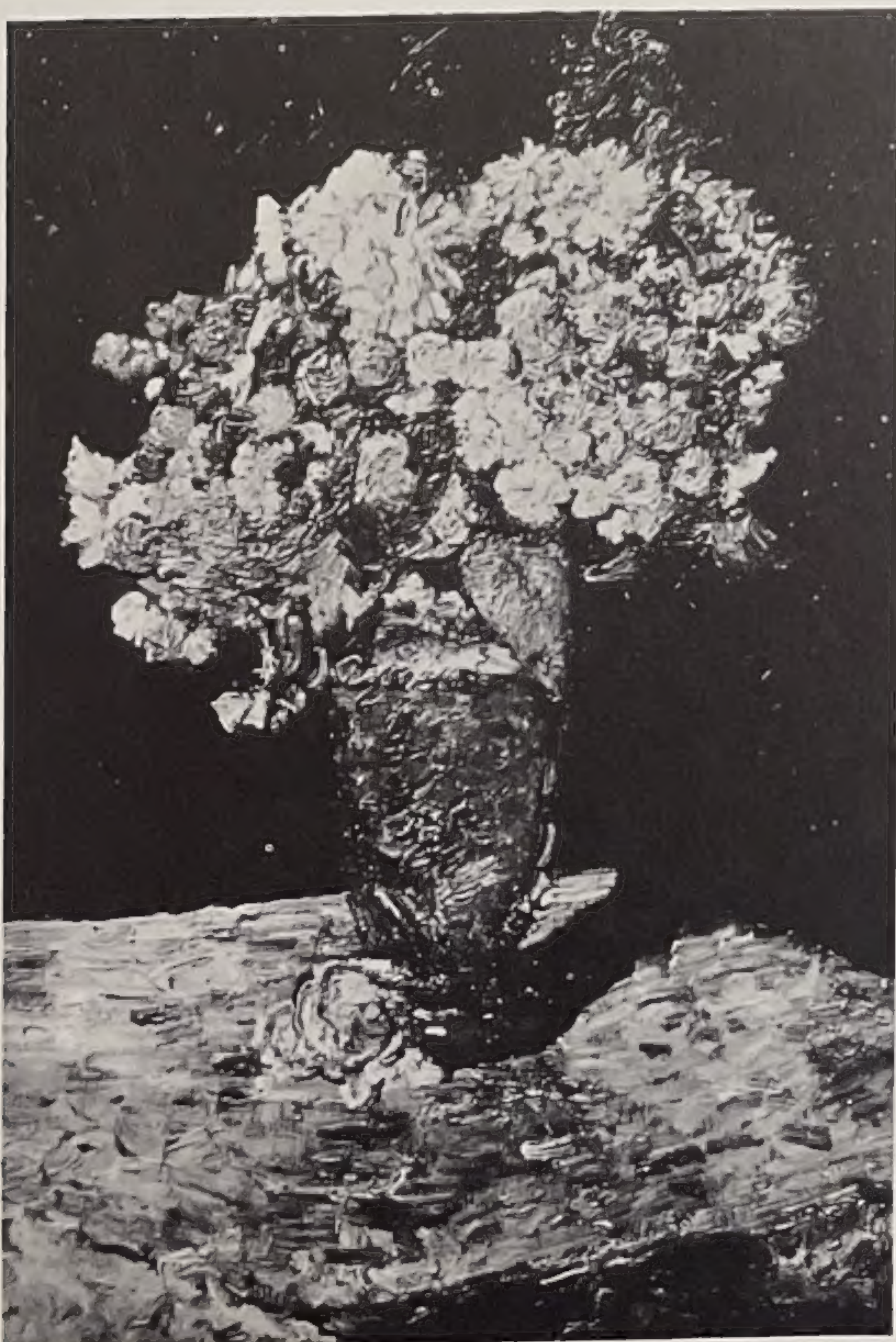


H. ED. CROSS.
Venice, Ponte San Trovaso, 1873

This canvas by a disciple of Seurat is a fine example of pointillist technique, with the paint applied carefully in small, square strokes. Each stroke of color maintains its independence. The colors are blended not on the canvas, but in the observer's eye.

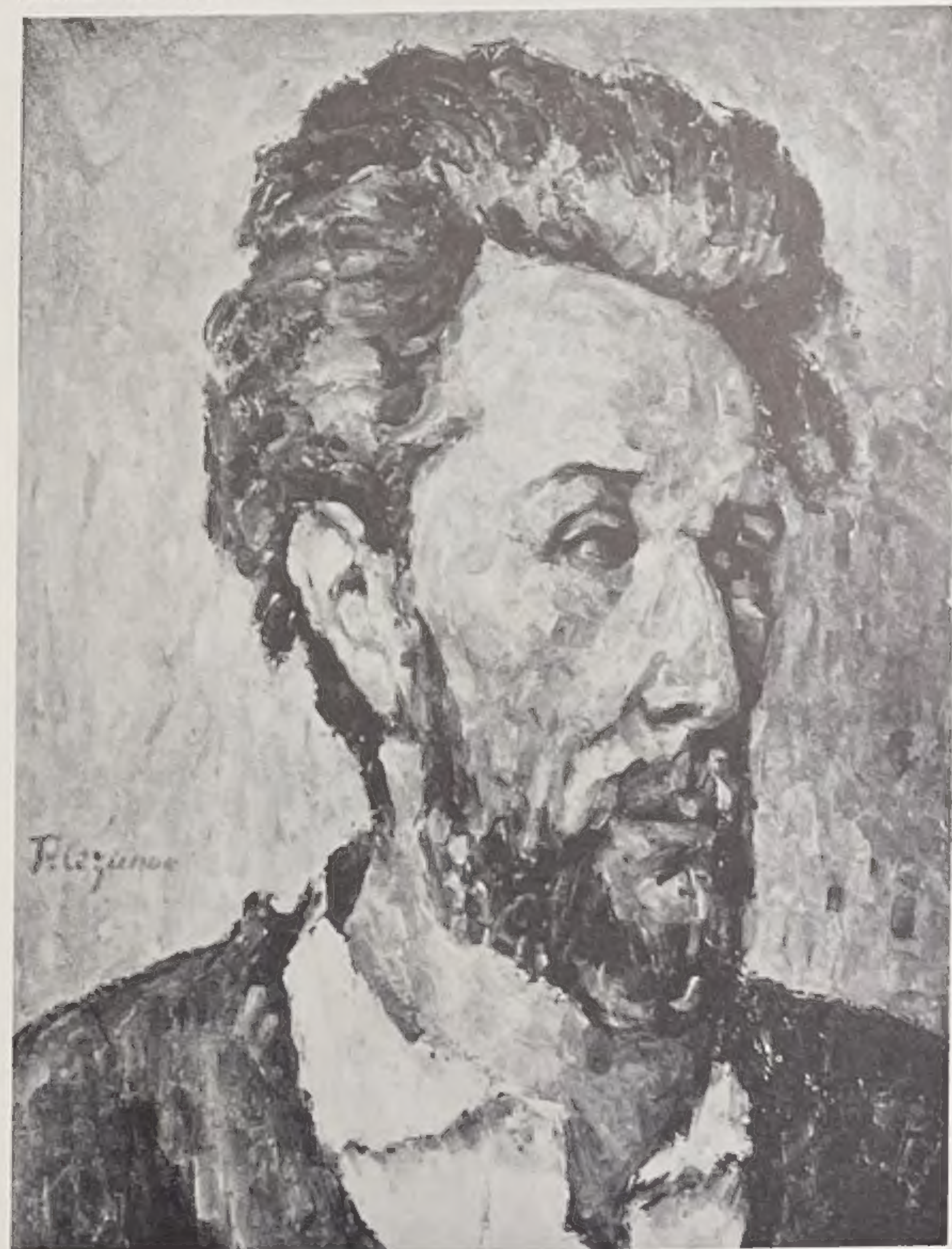
MONTICELLI. Field and Garden Flowers

Here the artist used both brush and palette knife, loading pigment on the canvas heavily to create a predominantly palette knife effect. The variety of point texture adds visual interest to the picture. Compare the crisp, brittle strokes of the flowers with the softer, blended quality of the table top.



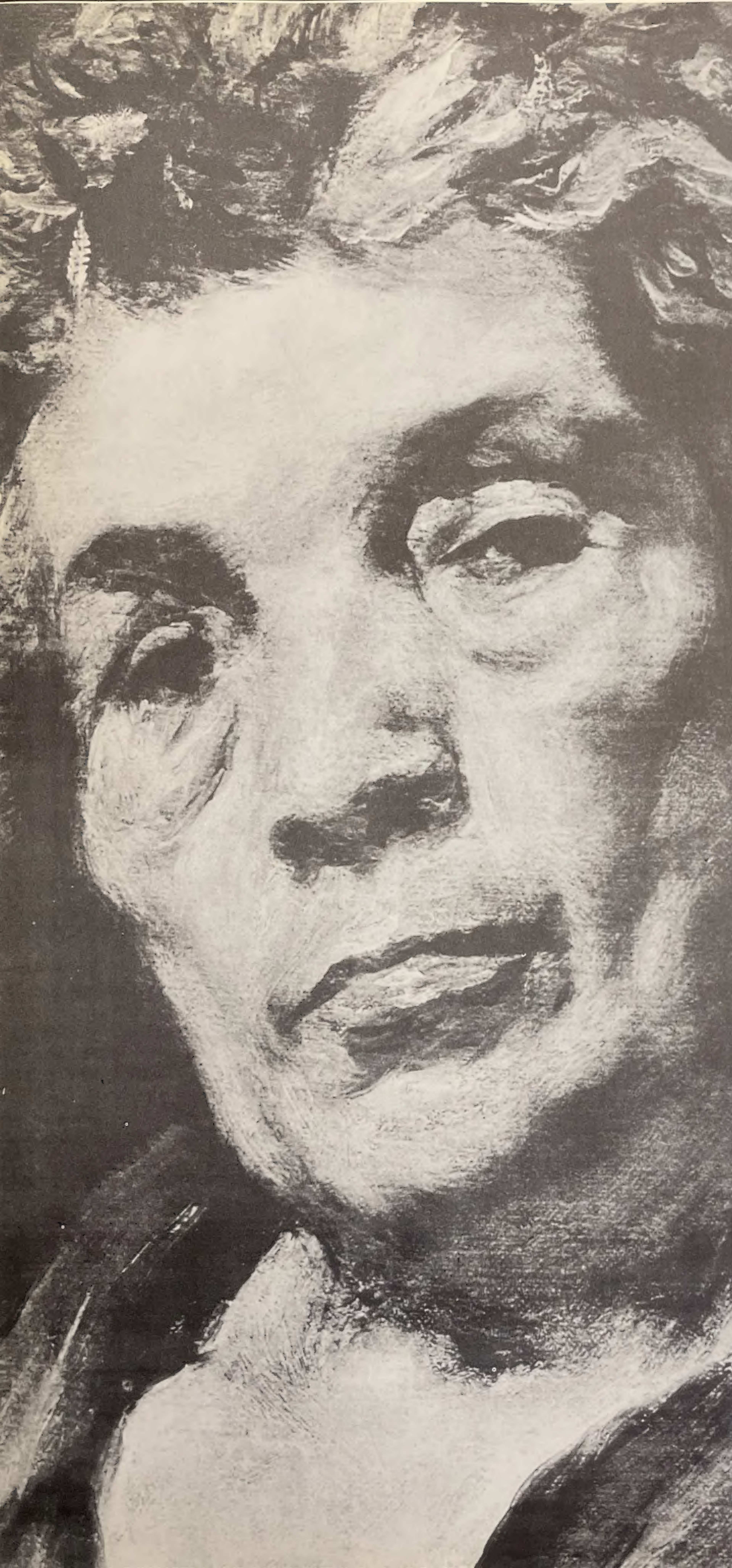
Collection of Mrs. Samuel A. Lewisohn

Collection Lord Victor Rothschild, London



CÉZANNE. Portrait of Victor Choquet

Brush strokes are here applied very freely, following the direction of the underlying planes. Besides giving the form solidity and texture, they add a quality of life and movement to the painted surface. This method of handling the brush is typical of Cézanne at this period of his career. It is so personal, in fact, that anyone well acquainted with Cézanne's style would immediately recognize this painting as his on the basis of the brushwork alone.



Musée du Prado, Madrid

VELAZQUEZ. Ésope

This is virtuoso brushwork of the highest order. As can be seen in the detail, the paint has been applied very directly. The brush molds the form, creates texture, draws detail all at the same time. Shadows have been painted quite thinly, to give them a retiring quality; highlights are heavily loaded with pigment. Notice how loose and free the treatment is when seen close up. At the distance from which the canvas would be viewed, this handling has great force of impact.

AUGUSTE RENOIR
In the Meadow
 Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art



When Renoir painted *In the Meadow*, he had perfected his characteristic way of putting down paint in a tissue of small, feathery strokes, a method that facilitated rapid out-of-doors work and evoked the scintillation of light over varied surfaces. Because of the resulting blurred edges, loss of detail and weakening of local color, no one section of strokes, in isolation, defines a form, but the aggregate of all the soft touches of color convincingly portrays figures and fields bathed in atmosphere.

Collection of Albert Dorne



AARON BOHROD. Church

The technique used in applying the pigment has much to do with the mood of the painting. Here the artist wished to achieve a cold, crisp effect. He combined brush and palette knife. The brush was used to supply smooth areas and soft edges in snow, walls, and sky, and a small brush added much of the detail. The knife was held flat to stroke in large areas of paint, but held on edge to put in the narrow, sharp strokes of paint seen in the trunks of the trees. The palette knife has added a crispness to this scene that it would have been difficult to achieve with brush alone.

National Gallery, London



REMBRANDT. Woman Bathing

With utmost directness, the brush is used to establish value and color and form, all at the same time. The chisel-like strokes are inserted with the greatest freedom. Obviously the artist is completely sure of what every mark will do in achieving the final effect. If the over-all forms are right, and the values judged correctly, there is no need to paint in every detail. The imagination of the observer will supply it.

